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ABSTRACT

In fall, 1988, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in Alexandria, Virginia selected 12 districts to comprise an Early Childhood Consortium. Consortium members attended two meetings a year for 3 years; received assistance in such areas as child-centered instruction and developmental curricula; planned an exemplary early childhood program for their district; and evaluated outcomes. Section 1 of this third-year report explains the consortium's purpose and goals, the school district selection process, and issues considered. Section 2 describes the six consortium meetings. After a discussion of the design of assessment tools, section 3 summarizes lessons learned about assessment, change, developmentally appropriate programs, early childhood advocacy, full- versus half-day kindergarten, the ways in which young children learn, multi-age grouping, and staff development. Finally, section 4 presents reports from the consortium members, who are employees of school districts in: (1) Aspen, Colorado; (2) Elmira, New York; (3) High Point, North Carolina; (4) Jackson, Mississippi; (5) Lincolnwood, Illinois; (6) Muscatine, Iowa; (7) Portland, Oregon (2 districts); (8) Redwood City, California; (9) Waukesha, Wisconsin; (10) South Brunswick, New Jersey; and (11) Phoenix, Arizona. The consortium application form, the form by means of which districts agreed to participate in the consortium, and a list of the school district addresses are appended. (AC)

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THE EDUCATION AND CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Report of the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium

APRIL 1992

BARBARA DAY
LYNN MALARZ
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Association for Supervision
and Curriculum Development

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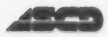

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The Education and Care of Young Children

Final Report of the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium
April 1992

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In the fall of 1988, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development launched a new Early Childhood Consortium. The twelve school districts, which were selected through a competition, were represented by four-member teams that had been approved by their respective superintendents. The genesis for this endeavor began in 1985 when the ASCD Executive Council and Board of Directors developed a ten-year plan to guide association activities. One of the five areas chosen for intensive work in that plan was the education and care of young children.

Purpose

The purpose of the Early Childhood Consortium was that the chosen school districts would make a commitment to improve their early childhood programs (defined here as ages 4 to 6). To follow through on their commitment, they would receive collegial assistance on such topics as:

- Child-centered versus teacher-directed instruction;
- Developmental versus formal academic curriculum;
- Uses of technology;
- Staffing ratios and teacher qualifications;
- Organizational aspects (full-day versus half-day programs, extended day, screening and eligibility, transition to higher grades, parental involvement, and special services);
- Funding; and
- Long-term evaluation to demonstrate the benefits of early programs to children.

Projected Outcomes

The consortium's goal was to enhance the abilities of the twelve districts to work collegially to establish exemplary programs based on the best research and practice.

To accomplish this, consortium members would:

- Review and analyze what they know about good early childhood practice and seek a resolution on key curricular, instructional, and supervision issues.
- Analyze their current early childhood programming in their district and develop a program plan given the children's needs and district's goals.
- Implement the early childhood plan; produce supporting documents.
- Evaluate the early childhood program; develop long-term evaluation strategies.
- Identify and examine effective processes for change.

Selection Process

School districts from around the country completed an extensive application form (See Appendix 1). A screening committee of ASCD members selected the final twelve districts of various sizes and geography as part of a competitive application process. The four-member teams, which were approved by their respective superintendents, consisted of a central office administrator, a building principal, a teacher of either 4- or 5-year-olds, and a board member/parent.

Each district's agreement (see Appendix 2) included a commitment to:

- Attend the two consortium meetings a year for each of the three years at the district expense.
- Be involved in planning an exemplary early childhood program for the district.
- Work with ASCD on evaluating the consortium outcomes.

Topics/Issues

The ASCD Policy Commission and consortium members selected a variety of topics and issues that included:

- The impact of state regulations and community demographics on early childhood programs;
- Classroom characteristics such as curriculum and instructional issues (for example, child-centered versus formal academic curriculum; uses of technology);
- Teacher perceptions of early childhood programming and actual teaching behaviors;
- Student academic and social gains;
- Parent perceptions of, and involvement in, early childhood programs;
- Roles and qualifications of personnel for administering, supervising, and teaching;
- School organization and events (for example, full-day versus half-day programs, extended day care, screening, and eligibility;
- School and district leadership in early childhood education; and
- Funding.

2. CONSORTIUM MEETINGS

The twelve school district teams participated in six meetings (two a year for each of the three years) held most often in one of the districts represented by the consortium. The visits to districts themselves allowed consortium members to observe ongoing school progress, visit consortium schools, meet with parents whose children were involved, and discuss changes taking place with board members.

Topics/Issues—Presentations and Discussions

The consortium invited experts in the field of early childhood education and other related areas to the meetings. Their presentations included:

- What's happening in Early Childhood?
- Early Childhood legislation
- Early Childhood research
- Accelerated learning
- Literacy and the young child
- Thinking skills
- Curriculum for Early Childhood programs
- Integrating curriculum and screening
- Parent involvement
- Program organization and administration:
  - —Site-based management
  - —Full-day versus half-day programs
  - —Extended day programs
  - —Multi-age grouping
  - —Curriculum components
  - —Classroom management components
  - —Integrating children with diverse needs
  - —Collaborative use of resources
  - —Organized units: teacher teams, working together over a four-year period with a progressive age group
- Long-range planning
- Motivating people for change
- Younger children in the public schools
- Staff development
- Collaboration with service agencies, community, and school/business partnerships
- Team building
- Retention in the early grades
- Portfolio assessment
- Technology for Early Childhood programs

Team Building

At each consortium meeting, teams met to evaluate progress, work on strategic plans with their own team members, and generally network among job-alike groups, focus groups, and topic areas.

Following presentations by various speakers, presenters met with teams to:

- Analyze implications of curriculum screening;
- Analyze implications of parent involvement and program organization for their community;
- Translate new knowledge about early childhood programs and existing practices in their early childhood program into a long range plan;
- Examine issues concerning transition from one grade to the next;
- Discuss building a climate conducive to change that "keeps the dream alive";
- Discuss budget priorities and innovative ways to fund early childhood programs;
- Examine issues and plans for multi-age grouping; and
- Analyze implications of moving toward alternative assessment and changing pupil reporting systems.

Poster Sessions

These sessions provided an opportunity for the participating districts to bring materials and ideas to share with fellow consortium members. Examples included:

- Reporting instruments
- Curriculum alignment ideas
- Units of study for curriculum integration
- Classroom organization formats
- Staff development materials
- Research findings/abstracts on topics such as full-day versus half-day kindergartens, and community/parent involvement practices.

Visits to Consortium Members' Schools

Consortium members visited a variety of schools in different settings and were able to interact with teachers, parents, children, administrators, and resource personnel.

Developmentally appropriate practice was not the only feature that the visitors noticed at these schools. Other features they noted were:

- A large amount of community/business involvement;

- A school that has focused on multi-age grouping for more than fifteen years; and
- Early childhood centers (ages 2 to 4) that cooperatively plan with public elementary schools.

In addition, they saw:

- Public elementary schools that include 3- and 4-year-olds in their school environment and even remodel their facilities to accommodate the younger children.
- A public school in a lower socioeconomic area that has established relationships with community health care professionals to meet the needs of the younger children and they have also made parent education and involvement an integral part of the school's program.
- A public school with a "high technology" focus.
- A public school featuring site-based management, cooperative learning techniques, multi-age grouping, and a learning center approach.
- A public school with a diverse population and multicultural activities that are integral part to the curriculum.

Collaboration With Other Professional Organizations

Representatives from the National Association for the Education of Young Children met with consortium members to discuss developmentally appropriate practices for young children and the accommodation process.

Staff members of the National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) presented *Right From the Start*, a publication from The Early Childhood Task Force to consortium members.

3. EVALUATION

Designing Assessment Tools

In designing the evaluation, the consortium sought to examine both processes and outcomes (See Figure 1). They addressed issues such as how the districts (and schools within the districts) developed a comprehensive early childhood program based on state-of-the-art knowledge. The evaluation design attempted to respond to the natural way in which the various districts assimilated information and arrived at understanding.

To implement a responsive evaluation approach, portfolios became the primary method used. Each district's portfolio included a structured collection of items detailing initial positions; the processes of change; final resolution of issues based on acquired knowledge (either within the districts or through consortium activities); and how the changes influenced the behavior of teachers, administrators, curriculum leaders, students, and parents.

Items in the portfolios included written policy statements and minutes of strategic planning meetings between teachers, central office personnel, parents, or the consortium team itself. Other examples of items included samples of children's work/play. class organization and learning environment, authentic assessment guidelines, and photographs/slides and videos of activities all structured to answer particular questions from the consortium framework of purposes or goal statements.

Each consortium district team developed a portfolio based on the team's initial practices prior to consortium involvement and then kept records of changes and processes that occurred during the three-year involvement in the consortium. The portfolios catalog and document experiences, address and resolve issues in the development and implementation of early childhood programs, and serve as a process for planning and demonstrating effectiveness of what has been implemented. Each portfolio serves as evidence of a process, answers to a set of questions, or responds to a set of tasks. Each portfolio also serves as a base for writing a detailed case study of each participating school district within the consortium. Portfolio data have provided the basis for this publication. In addition, the sharing of portfolio information among the consortium members and the examination of challenging ideas through case examples have been valuable tools for disseminating information among the consortium members and in outreach efforts.

Lessons We Learned

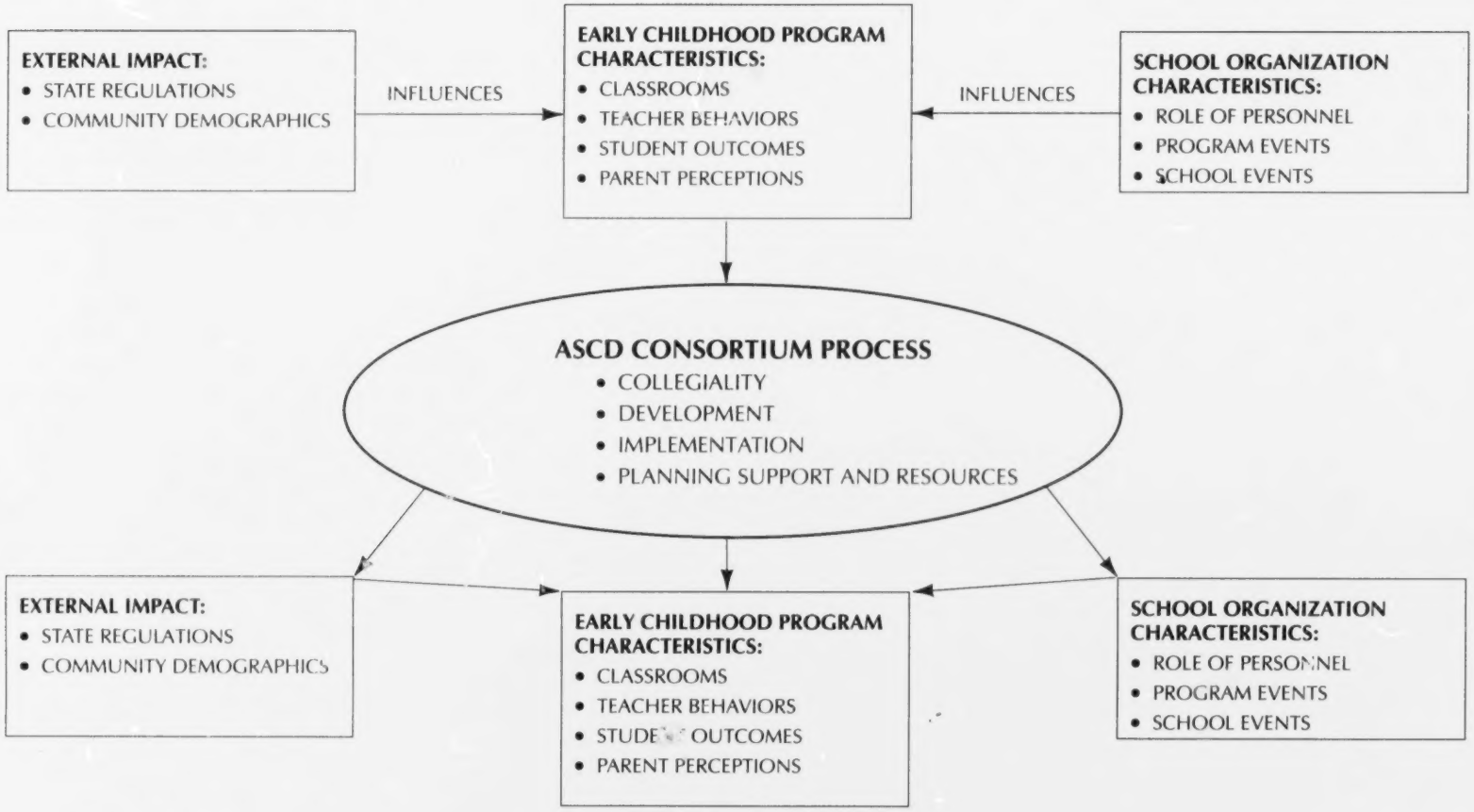
What lessons can learned from the schools who participated in the Early Childhood Consortium? How might other schools and communities profit from their experiences? To begin, these key themes persisted throughout the experiences of the consortium members.

Assessment

- Standardized tests used for 5- to 8-year-olds do not measure what we teach and do not accurately describe what children actually accomplish.
- Portfolio assessment provides an organization scheme that allows teachers to create a record that follows a child over the years.
- It may not be necessary to collect the same information on every child; teachers carry a vast amount of information about children in their heads and should be trusted to consider what information might be needed.
- Portfolios can describe a child's progress in specific terms with concrete examples of the child's work. In addition, portfolios also help solicit parent input, establishing a working relationship between parents and teachers.
- As teachers become researchers and developers, they understood theories better and were able to articulate them more clearly.
- Portfolio assessment raises expectations, increases differentiation of instruction, increases understanding of a young child's developmental stages, and enhances a teacher's abilities.
- Portfolios are most effective if they begin when a child enters the school system and if they contain anecdotal notes, teacher observations, and narrative comments.
- To maximize benefits from portfolios, teachers need to practice aligning observational notes with specific behaviors or performances.
- Districts must commit to providing teachers with the necessary time and support to proceed with the development of portfolio assessment.
- Using portfolio assessment, school districts may be less likely to retain a child or refer her to special services. Assessment becomes a long term process—for example, a four-year period of time—rather than a grade-by-grade approach.

FIGURE 1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EVALUATION



Change

- Change needs to be grounded in a strong, theoretical framework that shares these characteristics: a common realization of the need or desire to change and the intimate involvement over time of all those who will be affected.
- Change requires much planning, team effort, and commitment among all involved parties within a school district.
- Change requires a long time line that connects to curriculum efforts and staff development.
- Teachers can move a district to change if they identify values, gain administrative support, and sustain the impetus. Teachers in the project were able to transform the kindergartens from junior first grades with consumable texts, worksheets, and frustrated students to child-centered learning environments with unit-based curriculum, learning centers, and time for student-initiated learning.
- Change is never complete; a program's depends on continuous revision and refinement.
- For change to take place, the atmosphere must allow risk taking and must encourage and value creativity.
- Change *cannot* be mandated; it needs to be nurtured so that individuals realize the value of doing things more effectively.
- Change in primary programs—because of the long-range impact on children's success in the system—needs to be central to the district's larger mission, not peripheral.
- Change is always more difficult than anticipated and always encounters obstacles.
- To implement positive and effective change, district educational leaders must be willing to take risks and invest large amounts of professional time and physical and intellectual energy.
- Key decision makers must support the change.
- For the change process to proceed from words to action requires participants to share a common vision.
- Change is not always easy for many educators because they tend to teach the way they learned.
- Rather than "punishing" those having difficulty changing, provide them with positive role models.
- Children become the best ambassadors for change. Developmentally appropriate curriculum affects them positively; they enjoy school more, become less disruptive, and eager to learn more. Subsequently, their parents learn about good programs from their children.
- For change to occur and to ensure continuity, teacher networking is essential. Formally and informally, teachers need to be able to share ideas. Teamwork needs to be encouraged in a nonjudgmental atmosphere to gain trust.
- Change must involve the whole community: educators, public, and private agencies.

Developmentally Appropriate Program

- Children are able to grow differentially and find success every day.
- Children are able to explore their environment and develop the ability to think and learn.
- Staff members must believe in the effectiveness and importance of developmentally appropriate educational practices to switch from traditional teaching methods.
- As districts move toward developmentally appropriate programs, they must look beyond content textbooks, focusing on nontraditional materials that may be used in various integrated and active approaches.

Early Childhood Advocacy

- Advocacy needs to be ongoing for appropriate early childhood classes/programs to occur.
- Sharing information with parents not only increases their understanding it also enhances their support.
- Forming alliances with families, businesses, and other community members garners support for developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.

Full-Day Versus Half-Day Kindergarten

- When offered the choice of enrolling their children in a traditional half-day program or a full-day program, 97 percent of the parents chose the full day. Shortly, all parents overcame their fears and wanted a full-day program.

Knowledge About How Young Children Learn

- Each child enters school with individual characteristics and proceeds through the stages of development at his or her own rate.

- Each child's unique abilities are influenced by personal experiences.
- Child-initiated learning is a natural way that young children learn; it builds self-confidence, develops responsibility, and promotes independence.

Multi-age Grouping

- Multi-age grouping works in developmentally appropriate programs. Children learn much from each other. Older children stimulate three-year-olds to try new things and are themselves stimulated to develop leadership skills and self confidence.
- Exceptional children can be successfully integrated into developmentallv appropriate early childhood programs. In multi-age groupings they can find peers who are working on their level. Other children quickly adjust to exceptional children, learning to appreciate what they bring to the group. All gain from the experience, none lose.

Staff Development

- Ongoing training/staff development is critical especially during the change process.
- School district members must collaborate if people are to share the vision that "Schools need to be ready for children, not children ready for the schools."
- Intensive staff development opportunities are essential to making grass roots changes successful.
- Site-based decision making or collaborative team building requires allocating additional time in the school year.
- Educators involved in the early childhood programs must be well versed in current early childhood research and findings.
- Staff development activities may invoke discussions as to why a district's present programs are not developmentally appropriate.
- A staff development program featuring an external consultant who is an expert in the field of early childhood education lends credibility to the message of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs.

4. Consortium Member Reports

District and Community Support: Aspen School District Aspen, Colorado

Barbara Tarbet

Unfortunately, Aspen's reputation for affluence and wealth has created more harm than good for the school district. In 1988, the Colorado School Finance Act literally froze spending in school districts, curtailing their ability to solicit local voters and holding them to 1988 budgets. Consequently, adding a new program could potentially take funding from existing programs.

At the same time, our community is experiencing a baby boom. The elementary school's population has increased more than 60 percent in the last seven years.

The dilemma is compounded by the special need for full-time, affordable child care in a resort community. Nearly 80 percent of our community works in tourist-related services that entail weekend and evening hours, or during peak season, seven days a week.

Demographics

Although perceived as "unique," the community of Aspen, situated at the end of the Roaring Fork Valley, is a fairly typical, small community. Its small school district consists of approximately 1,000 students with one high school (280 students), one middle school (250 students), and one elementary school (470 students).

The Program

The critical first step in developing a comprehensive early childhood program within a district and community is to create widespread support and understanding for the concept. All elements—district administrators, school board members, and representatives from community services and local agencies—must "buy in" to the concept. They need to work together for the program's growth and stability.

The dream of our early childhood committee was to create a fully integrated school and community partnership that would revolve around an educational center for 3- to 5-year-old children. Using a downtown school site we envisioned a building filled with both adult and child learning centers. For both regular and special education preschool students, we began designing a developmentally appropriate curriculum that emphasized interactive learning. We would staff the program with trained early childhood professionals, both certified and paraprofessionals.

For two years our committee worked diligently to detail a plan for opening a comprehensive year-round early childhood program that provided education, care, and intervention for all children 3 to 5 years old. Working with a knowledgeable and progressive kindergarten staff, we wished to incorporate and expand developmentally appropriate educational practices in our program.

The Challenge

Our school district was not being challenged to change from a half-day to a full-day program nor did it have to articulate a child-centered program within the elementary school. Quite proudly, we already touted a progressive full-day kindergarten filled with activities, movement, and language in an interactive environment. Moreover, a child-centered approach permeated the entire elementary school, kindergarten through fourth grade. We closely followed the philosophy of the National Association of School Boards of Education Task Force Report philosophy, "Early learning, if based on exploration, problem-solving, experimentation and creativity, can sow the seeds of a love of learning that carries throughout life" (NASBE 1988, p.12).

It was easy to convince the superintendent and school board that early childhood education and intervention is well worth the time and money.

We based our philosophy of early intervention on the research and concepts practiced by "The Center" in Leadville, Colorado. They include:

- $1.00 invested in preschool saves $6.00 at the other end.

- Research done by the Perry Preschool Project shows that children who attend preschool are less likely to drop out, are more employable as adults, and are more literate.
- Exceptional children achieve higher gains when grouped with regular peers.
- The billions of dollars spent each year in remediation should be spent on prevention.
- School districts can achieve the greatest gains by addressing the problems of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

After the passage of P.L. 99-457, which required school districts to provide special education services to handicapped children ages 3 to 5 years by 1991, our argument for an early childhood education program gained even more support in the district.

For two years our committee worked with the ASCD consortium members and our superintendent and school board to develop an exemplary program.

The Community Need

The Early Childhood Committee established the need for affordable, year-round, seven day-a-week child care, and the district recognized its role in providing that program. However, in the spring of 1990 after two years of hard work, our dream of affordable child care and preschool center looked more like a nightmare. Four out of five of our board members went up for re-election and the superintendent resigned.

Coupled with that, the 1988 Colorado Finance Act was becoming a practicing reality. Not only did we not have our knowledgeable supporters, we suddenly had no money for a new program. After two years of hard work we were back to square one!

Let the Change Begin—Again

In the midst of our own local change, education was on the agenda nationwide. The media, local and national, suddenly discovered dramatic stories depicting the need for early intervention. The dichotomy of needing to engage in strategic educational change including early childhood education yet having fewer dollars than ever before was becoming increasingly evident. No one could argue the value of early childhood education and intervention. No one disagreed with the statement made by the National Association for the Education of Young Children: "A high quality early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families" (1987, p. 1).

Three years ago the Aspen School District's Early Childhood Committee made the near fatal mistake of assuming that the board's and superintendent's support would be constant, guaranteed, and long lasting. As is with many programs in education, when school boards or superintendents change, support often fluctuates. We realized that, as the early childhood supporters, we needed to continue advocating our programs. With this in mind and with the support of the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium, our committee developed a vision of the ideal early childhood program for our district and community.

Expanding the Vision: Elmira City School District Elmira, New York

Harriet Sweet

Once the Elmira School District joined the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium, a small group of kindergarten and 1st grade teachers in Elmira, declared "no skill and drill" and became the heart and soul of the district's Early Childhood Committee. For the last four years they have nurtured the many changes to the district's early childhood programs.

This committee, with assistance from the ASCD Consortium team and its philosophy statement, set goals, program objectives, and a three-year action plan designed to implement developmentally appropriate practices throughout the district.

Demographics

The Elmira City School District is a small-city school district in the southern tier of upstate New York. Its population of 8,400 students, prekindergarten to grade 12, are housed in nine elementary schools, two junior high schools, and two high schools. The ethnic distribution is approximately 10 percent minority. The district's local budget, voted on by an elected nine-member school board, was $58 million for the 1991-92 school year.

The Program

For more than twenty years, our district has offered a prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds. Currently, eleven prekindergarten classes are funded by New York State or Chapter 1. The prekindergarten collaborates with Head Start, which provides the comprehensive services portion of the program. A single community-wide registration for all 4-year-olds is done in conjunction with the district's kindergarten registration. A recent survey indicates that virtually all 4-year-olds are placed in a program if their parents wish it.

The district's kindergarten provides a half-day program for all children who reach 5 by December 1. Two schools are initiating pilot full-day kindergarten programs this year. In cooperation with the school district, local agencies provide preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old handicapped children. The school district has consciously decided not to provide any prefirst grade programs for students deemed "not ready" for 1st grade. Instead, its goal has always been to have all 1st grade classrooms ready for all children. The ASCD Consortium experience has provided the necessary impetus and support to achieve this goal.

Our 1st and 2nd grade classrooms, and some kindergartens, had become too focused on academic skill achievements and testing to measure these achievements.

The Beginning

Four years ago, a group of dedicated early childhood teachers met to discuss their frustration with the regimented structure that existed in their classes. Somehow, over the last ten years, practices not suitable to young children had evolved. The children were not experiencing success, and the teachers found it difficult to deal with the failures of five- and six-year-olds.

For months, this small group discussed the wide span of the children's developmental needs and their changing family environments. Blaming the difficulties on societal circumstances did not empower the teachers to change family circumstances or the children's needs. Knowing this, a few members of the group considered making changes in the classroom environment instead.

Eventually, these educators were able to articulate a vision of what their classrooms should be, and slowly, they began to make changes.

The first critical step was building a shared vision. Once the vision was shared, the group could establish a readiness for change, and change could proceed. Districtwide implementation of a vision necessitates additional considerations, which we describe in the rest of this section.

The Vision Grows

The group of teachers, known as the district's Early Childhood Committee, used their discussions to articulate a mission and goals, which they then communicated in a report to the board of education. To build their case for developmentally appropriate practices, the committee, with the leadership of a district supervisor, engineered a careful, comprehensive campaign. The communication was constant as they talked with other educators and distributed newsletters and research articles at grade level and building faculty meetings.

For a two-year period, staff development initiatives were numerous, including superintendent conference days and how-to workshops sponsored by our district and the local Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). Teachers, who requested materials to help them change their instructional practices, received them.

Looking for Consensus

When the committee felt that their fellow educators had enough information to understand and share their vision, they conducted a survey of all primary teachers in the district to verify their understanding and readiness for change. The survey offered three responses:

1. Yes, I believe that change towards a more developmental classroom environment is necessary, and I am ready to begin the change process.

2. Yes, I believe that change towards a more developmental classroom environment is necessary, but I'm not able to begin the change process at this time due to the following reason(s):

3. No, I do not believe that change towards a more developmental classroom environment is necessary.

Only six teachers out of the 84 teachers did not believe change was necessary. Of the 78 who responded positively, 22 were not yet able to begin the change process. The reluctant 22 feared that the change would not receive the full support of the district or community. Of the 56 teachers who were ready, many had already begun implementing changes and were well on their way. Others were at different stages of development and all freely expressed any significant concerns they had.

Following the survey, it became apparent that just sharing the vision was not sufficient to move the entire district in this new direction. For some staff, there remained a significant leap from the belief in the need for change to the change itself.

Although most of the primary staff could verbalize the vision and state their belief in it, we noticed a difference in their abilities to enact the changes needed, no matter their apparent readiness. Changes occurred in some way in most classrooms. For example, there were fewer workbooks and dittos and certainly, an increase in learning centers and hands-on activities. However, the vision as stated in the early childhood mission, "All children will achieve success by interacting in a child-centered classroom that is organized according to developmental principles" had not been achieved. Our analysis of why there was so much diversity in staff readiness levels may be useful to other districts embarking on this task.

From Words to Action

Although many staff members believed in the research that supported developmentally appropriate practices, their training at the university level as well as successful personal experiences as students may have presented them with a conflict. People tend to teach the way they learn, especially if they were successful learners. A hands-on experiential environment was probably not part of their learning experience and might be threatening. Although these teachers may sincerely believe the research, they may not be able to internalize the belief statement enough to alter their practices *independently*.

Also, in a highly centralized district, teachers and administrators may not feel empowered to change. When the central purchase of textbooks and central development of curriculums are the modes, staff may not feel comfortable changing without a clear agenda and a structure. A shared vision with philosophy and goals, without a stated curriculum, may not be enough to enable a plunge into a change. Developmentally appropriate programs provide an opportunity for individualized programming that can vary greatly. If firm guidelines for day-to-day activities—teachers guides and written grade level curriculum—are part of existing district practice, changing to individualized curriculums could be difficult.

The 22 hesitant teachers cited their concerns about the uncertainty of sufficient support. They mentioned specific needs: Planning time; reduced class sizes; additional staff development; and materials. Although some of these things were already available, there seemed to be an underlying lack of trust in the district's supplying these necessities.

Finally, these teachers may not have felt confident in their abilities to enact the different methods and concerned about how they would be evaluated. In the past, teachers experienced success as professionals by using directive methodologies and materials. With these changes, they had to wonder if they still would be viewed as successful practitioners.

Ultimately, we identified three issues as important to enabling everyone to share in our vision: Internal commitment, empowerment, and support.

Proceeding Slowly

To create a sense of empowerment, we approached the changes through individual school initiatives, rather than as a districtwide endeavor. Although diverse, initiatives were within the framework of the philosophy and goals established centrally, and all fell within the scope of the research on developmentally appropriate practice.

For instance, two schools pursued the establishment of a full-day kindergarten. Primary teachers from both schools are collaborating to ensure that the additional time in kindergarten will allow for an appropriate horizontal expansion of the curriculum and is not just an add-on of paper and pencil work. The plan calls for children to be placed randomly, thus maintaining heterogeneous grouping. The flexible curriculum will center around integrated thematic units. Three schools are in the planning stages of multi-age groupings. One school is focusing on providing alternatives to grade retention.

All initiatives are receiving district support and resources, but most important, they are receiving the clear message that decentralized efforts are appropriate. While the schools not planning substantial changes are not being punished, those who are making changes are clearly being rewarded, besides providing role models for others.

Central Support

Teachers expressed desire for tangible evidence—in the form of documents or guidelines—of the district's commitment to the stated philosophy and goals. The result was a new primary progress report that eliminated numerical grading and included items such as "sees self as writer" and "shows an appreciation of literature." At the same time they eliminated all standardized testing in the kindergarten and first grades. A scope and sequence of expectations provided a written framework that was in line with the new philosophy and goals and was not skills-driven. It provided the necessary benchmarks without the inflexibility of specific program guides.

In addition, individual schools received a greater share of the district budget to allow greater control of the resources they identified as necessary to their programs. These resources permitted more planning time. In its 1991-92 annual budget, the central office also responded to the priority that aide service be made available in all kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade classrooms.

Facing Reality

The most critical realization for the district was that a districtwide effort involving such a broad range of changes cannot happen at once. The change process would be ongoing, lasting for several years. To overcome the lack of confidence would necessitate team teaching, peer coaching, and collegial planning opportunitites. This slowness should not be viewed negatively because taking the time needed might ensure that the change is longer lasting than previous efforts. The district also needed to realize that their ongoing commitment to change was critical to maintaining staff trust levels.

We have accomplished one update of the existing plan and have extended our timeline to allow a five-year time frame. The progress is steady, consistent, and highlighted by increasing involvement and commitment.

Although after four years implementation is incomplete, we have many classrooms in the district where the vision has indeed become a reality. If the district can determine the critical components that encouraged change in these classrooms and continue to provide these components, our implementation will no doubt spread more quickly to other classrooms. It is conceivable that in another four years, developmentally appropriate practice will be the cornerstone of the majority of classrooms in the district.

Developing a State Model Preschool Program: High Point Public Schools High Point, North Carolina

Susan Howard, Betty Royal, John Schroeder

The Fairview Preschool Pilot is one of two original pilots designated in North Carolina to demonstrate that preschool children can be served effectively in a public school setting. A multi-age group of children from various backgrounds with an array of abilities and special needs spend productive days in a warm, language-rich environment with a well-trained staff. The full-day, year-long program promotes learning through active play. It also provides parenting skills for the children's first and most important teachers, their parents.

Demographics

High Point, North Carolina, is a manufacturing community of approximately 70,000 people. Located in the Piedmont section of North Carolina between the larger cities of Greensboro and Winston-Salem, High Point is known both as the "furniture capital" and the "hosiery capital of the world." The community is 68 percent white and 32 percent nonwhite (mostly African Americans).

The High Point Public School system serves approximately 7,200 students in nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The ethnic makeup of the school system is 49 percent white and 51 percent nonwhite.

The Program

Fairview Elementary School, located in the southern quadrant of High Point, serves the greatest percentage of economically and educationally deprived children in the district. Seventy-six percent of the student body are at or below the poverty level and qualify for free or reduced lunch. Over half of the district's students for whom English is a second language attend Fairview. Fairview also has a large student turnover rate, gaining and losing approximately one student per day.

Children entering Fairview Street Elementary School evidenced the need for language-enriched experiences. The story of one small boy who arrived for his first day at Fairview stated the problem clearly. He came on the bus to enroll himself in kindergarten. Although he knew his nickname, he could not tell us his real first or last name. His vocabulary was limited to essentials like wawa (water), juice, and potty. Children from his neighborhood helped school personnel with his name and address so that the home/school coordinator could go to the home and help the mother fill out registration forms.

Several weeks later, the principal took the child home to discuss his progress with the mother. There, sitting in the corner were two younger brothers who appeared to have similar language needs. It was then that the principal realized the need for a program to address the needs of these and other similar children before they reached the classroom.

The principal lobbied the superintendent and anyone else who would listen, seeking a source of funding to establish a public preschool at Fairview. Eventually, he and the superintendent obtained Chapter 1 funding to begin a preschool class for 4-year-olds. They hoped that by getting children during their most rapidly developing years, they could make a difference.

Before Fairview could house a preschool program, they had to prepare a room and hire staff. Since the ideal room required major renovations to meet health and safety codes, the assistant superintendent for building and grounds became involved in their vision. The principal, despite the heavy physical labor, pitched in and helped the maintenance crew pour cement for the handicapped ramp and cut through a brick wall to add an outside door. The principal's presence and willingness to get dirty demonstrated his commitment and motivated the crew to work harder and faster and most important, to buy into the vision. As a result, the crew voluntarily built a large sandbox with landscape timbers and "found" a truckload of sand.

Readying the classroom required $4,000 worth of materials and equipment. Since there was not enough money, school officials begged and borrowed to get

the furniture, carpet, and other materials needed. They even built some things from scratch.

Once the facility and staff were ready, students were chosen using a series of home visits and tests. The LAP-D (Learning Accomplishment Profile-Diagnostic Edition) helped to identify students who were two or more years below expectations. Educators developed and implemented an experience-based, language-enriched program to help these children.

Once the class started, the principal's role changed and as head cheerleader and tour leader for visitors, he encouraged ongoing program development. He also served as a much-needed male role model for these children, twenty of whom had no father at home. Once Chapter 1 personnel recognized the rapid growth of the children, they began recommending that other school systems develop similar programs. By the end of the first year, seventeen school systems visited our program and used it as a model for their own Chapter 1 programs. The teacher and the principal, who have served on local and state committees to develop curriculum and certification standards for preschool programs, have remained active in training other preschool personnel.

Students have averaged almost two years growth a year. Often, the students with the greatest needs on entering the preschool program have scored higher on the second grade standardized tests than other Fairview second graders. Unfortunately, even with these tremendous results, we were serving only 20 percent of the children who needed our help. The need to find additional resources to expand the program was imperative.

Subsequently, we applied to North Carolina's Preschool Pilot Program. After being visited by a team selected by the Department of Public Instruction, Fairview was chosen as one of two pilot sites for their program.

This selection provided the funds needed to start a second preschool class at Fairview. The State Department of Public Instruction required that all tenets in the North Carolina early childhood handbook *Circle of Childhood* be present and fully implemented in its pilot programs.

Philosophy and Curriculum

The core of Fairview Preschool's philosophy is the belief that all children enter school with unique abilities influenced by their personal experiences. Recognizing the parents' role as a child's first and most important teacher, educators attempt to build an atmosphere of cooperation with the parents. The school environment should provide a developmentally appropriate program that allows for exploring the environment and develop a child's ability to think and learn.

Circle of Childhood, which provides the curriculum used in the Fairview Preschool, stresses the importance of child-initiated learning because of the positive and long-term effect it has on a child's intelligence and on the quality of life for the child, the family, and the community.

Fairview Preschool supports this fundamental premise of the *Circle of Childhood*:

> Young children are curious and active human beings who learn from their world. Play is the world and work of young children. Children who are deprived of meaningful play experiences are handicapped in all aspects of their development. Play provides the time, the space, the experience, and the interaction necessary for the gradual development of the whole child—physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

The *Circle of Childhood* sets forth nine goals for an early childhood program. When a developmentally appropriate environment is provided, young children will develop and grow. These are the nine goals with indicators of ways in which children may grow.

1. *Self-worth*
   Children smile frequently, make decisions, try again when mistakes are made, accept responsibility, talk with peers and adults.
2. *Respect for the physical environment; assumption of responsibility within the immediate and personal environment*
   Children begin to take turns, respond to requests, listen to others, demonstrate self-help skills, help with clean up, enjoy and care for plants and animals.
3. *Capacity to use natural curiosity about the immediate and personal environment by using all the senses*
   Children ask questions, test limits, talk about experiences, use all of their senses.
4. *Ability to conceptualize patterns and relationships in the immediate and personal environment*
   Children begin to make comparisons, begin to

verbalize own actions, make repeated patterns with blocks, represent experiences through drawings.

5. *Ability to express and represent thoughts, feelings, and experiences in the immediate and personal environment*
   Children use a variety of art media to express and represent experiences, retell stories, begin to make sense of print.

6. *Ability to make decisions and to solve problems in the immediate and personal environment*
   Children choose materials with which to work, make choices between two options, use trial and error method, begin to work through interpersonal conflicts that arise.

7. *Capacity to use developmentally appropriate thinking processes in relation to the immediate and personal environment*
   Children ask questions to solve problems, make statements to announce discoveries, use materials in original, nontraditional ways.

8. *Capacity to use large and small muscles in the immediate and personal environment*
   Children use a variety of whole body movements in dancing, playing, pretending; use an array of materials and equipment; try out new movements.

9. *Ability to live in harmony with others in the immediate and personal environment*
   Children begin to display an awareness of others' feelings, begin to take turns, listen to others, begin to contribute willingly.

Environment

Young children come to the Fairview Preschool from a place called "home," where they began growing and learning about their world. It is important for this place called "school" to provide an environment that is "homelike" with real "stuff" so that children may continue to investigate and make sense out of their world. Providing a classroom that pays careful attention to the inside and outside environment is critical to establishing a model setting that fosters the total development of the young child.

There must be a strong commitment to provide a setting that incorporates the criteria for the total environment for a preschool classroom. If renovations and additions are necessary to make a site appropriate, every effort should be made to follow the criteria carefully so that the total environment allows for children's learning according to developmentally appropriate practice.

High Point Public Schools made a commitment to provide a quality environment for Fairview Preschool. A facility adjacent to Fairview School was rented and renovations were made that met the guidelines set forth in the *Circle of Childhood*.

The inside learning environment:

- Spacious (75 square feet per child)
  (The maintenance crew knocked out a wall between two smaller rooms to create one spacious area).
- Low windows to allow children to see outside
- Immediate access to the outdoors
  (Staff members facilitate the children's play inside and outside throughout the day).
- Carpet and tile/vinyl floor surfaces
  (Children investigate with messy "stuff" and need floors that they can learn to clean with ease).
- Sink units with warm and cold water and appropriate toilet accessible to classroom area
- Child-level countertop space
  (The maintenance crew built cabinets with countertop space around a portion of an interior wall that could not be totally removed in the renovation).
- Appropriate storage areas (cubbies, separate area for storage of coats, and equipment).
  (We found there is no such thing as too much storage).
- Eye-level display areas for children's work
- Electrical outlets.

Learning centers should include the following areas:

cooking	books	dramatic play	supply
listening	blocks	music	topical
sand & water	visual arts	manipulatives	printing
explorations	book making	woodworking	junk
stitching	writing		

The outside learning environment:

- 5,000 square feet of enclosed play space that is separate from play area for older children
- Structures for climbing and swinging
- Places to sit
- Open space for running and movement

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- Places for sand and water play
- Paved area for riding toys and push and pull toys
- Varied terrain
- Covered area with work spaces
- Storage area for equipment

The Schedule

The Fairview Preschool offers a developmentally appropriate environment for sixteen preschool children ages 3, 4, and 5. Open eleven hours daily to provide total care for the children we serve, we are operational year round so that working parents have continuous care for their children.

The Children

Fairview Preschool serves sixteen children and their families. The children, each a unique individual, receive total care in a heterogeneous, multi-age setting. The preschool also serves three children with special needs. The High Point Preschool for the Handicapped regularly visits the Fairview Preschool to broaden the experience-base for their children, which increases the number of children being served by the program.

Parents as Partners

Parental involvement is vital to the success of the program. All parents of participating children must sign a statement committing their support of and active participation in the program. At an annual orientation meeting, new parents learn what is expected of them and what services they can expect. They also receive a handbook with relevant information about the pilot for their reference.

Since the program provides full-day services, parents need only to transport their children to and from school each day. All parents may visit with the staff for a few minutes each day about their child's routines and progress. These short visits build a strong trust relationship between school and home.

Throughout the year parents may attend sessions that deal with topics such as improving parenting skills, using a guidance approach to discipline, listening to your child, and providing good nutrition. Parents receive special information about good health practices, the job market, and educational opportunities available in the community. An on-site GED Program is offered to parents through Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC).

A library of books is also available to parents. Reading to their children strengthens the family bond, and children begin to see the value of learning to read. Parents want to be the best teachers possible for their children, so they strive to learn the skills needed for being good teachers at home.

The staff reinforces the school's interest with home visits and continuously strengthens the bond between home and school. This fosters more parent involvement in the school.

Working Together for Quality

Collective efforts of various community agencies and groups have greatly enhanced the preschool pilot. The High Point Parks and Recreation Department leases space to the school system for the pilot. The center, which is adjacent to Fairview School, offers classrooms, office space, and appropriate play areas.

High Point's Exceptional Children's Program has provided a full-time teacher assistant for the pilot so that several mildly handicapped children may participate in the program. These "special children" have made tremendous progress as a result of being mainstreamed in the pilot.

Other special community friends to the pilot include the Junior League, Family Services, Guilford Technical Community College, Lowes Grocery Store, and Wood-Armfield Furniture Company. The Junior League provides two volunteers who work with the children weekly. The staff of Family Services of High Point, Inc. has been helpful in providing programs for parents. GTCC has worked with Fairview Elementary to set up an on-site GED program for parents. Lowes Grocery Store has adopted the entire school and provides volunteer time as well as "free" groceries for special projects. Wood-Armfield Furniture Company donated two wingback chairs, a table, a framed print, and a lamp for the parent area.

Other valuable resources have been closer to home. The school system's maintenance department converted two small classrooms into one large room, which is ideal for the sixteen children being served. All members of the board of education visited the class and support the program. Older children visit occasionally and offer assistance to the preschoolers. It is exciting to see the differences that occur when a

community works together to make a program successful.

Getting the Word Out

Much of the community assistance enjoyed by the pilot has been the result of positive media coverage. The press are invited to all happenings and frequently attend. Two area newspapers have written human interest articles about the pilot with great pictures.

Observers frequently visit. Teachers, principals, and superintendents; college students, professors, and deans; community businessmen and women; and parents of prospective participants enjoy the natural learning that takes place. A visiting school board member, Colleen Hartsoe, recently recalled this scene:

> Swinging from the last overhead bar on the outdoor gym set, a three-year-old, April, was trying to figure out how to get down. Although she was her body length from the ground, she showed no fear, just calculation.
>
> "*Do you want help?" asked Susan, the teacher.*
> "No." Still no movement.
> Susan called to the four-year-old Tony. "Climb up and show April how you get down."
> As April continued to dangle, Tony demonstrated.
> Again, "Do you need help?"
> "No."
>
> April had a second decision to make, either drop to the ground or get down by climbing along the side the way Tony had come up. She chose to inch her way over to the side and cautiously make her way down.
> Susan complimented both children. "You did it, April" and "Thank you, Tony, for showing April. You're a good friend."

This whole episode lasted five minutes out of Fairview's daily 11-hour program. It illustrates these early-childhood teaching tenets:

- The equipment is in place with the opportunity to use it *when and how the child wants to.*
- The teacher is observing nearby. Her observation skills are based on her knowledge of children and their needs. She is not merely watching to see that no one gets hurt. She clearly knows what she wants to teach.
- The child is allowed to test her own ability (another person is not testing it). She knows help is available. She has choices.
- Another child is given a chance to demonstrate his skill but not in a spirit of competition (also, he *is* older, perhaps an advantage of multi-age grouping).
- The self-esteem of both children is enhanced.

It is not hard to see not only the efficacy of such developmental learning but also the difficulty of this type of teaching. A teacher cannot go to the classroom with the specific plan, "Today, I will teach self-sufficiency." When the teacher reviews the day, it is not to assess the effectiveness of a pre-laid plan, but to ask, "Did I miss an opportunity *that a child offered me?*"

Program Evaluation

The preschool pilot is evaluated in three areas: the program, the staff, and the children.

An external evaluator conducts the program evaluation, using thirty-seven environmental components in seven general areas: Personal care routines, furnishings and display for children, language reasoning experiences, fine and gross motor activities, creative activities, social development, and adult needs. Each item is rated from 1-7, with seven being the highest. The pilot has consistently received strong ratings in this evaluation.

The principal uses the state's standard evaluation forms to evaluate the teacher and staff. An early childhood instrument, developed for use with preschool teachers, is currently being validated. The instrument effectively measured the strengths of the pilot's teacher this past year.

The children are continuously observed and assessed in the areas set forth in the nine curriculum of the *Circle of Childhood.* The staff makes regular anecdotal notes on the children for the files. These help document skills being learned by the children. This information is shared with parents on a regular basis. Standardized tests are *not* administered in the pilot.

Funding a Preschool Program

The preschool pilot has been funded for three years through a Chapter 2 grant awarded through the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. The total amount of money received is $375,000 or $125,000 per year. The funds have provided for an effective year-round program for preschool children.

Learning from Our Experiences

Knowing what we now know, if we started over, we would:

• Find better ways to identify and hire staff

We had an experienced and competent preschool teacher to start the program. In selecting the two assistants, we interviewed and checked references as with any other positions. In the future, we would also require the final candidates to serve as substitute teacher assistants in a class for four year olds or one of the kindergartens. This would better identify people who work well with young children.

• Alter the way we identify children to be served

Initially children were selected randomly without considering their family situations. The majority of these children's parents worked ten-hour days in the High Point factories. This placed tremendous strain on the program because direct service preempted other program facets, such as planning time, parent conferences, and assessment. We still have some 11-hour children, but they no longer constitute the majority. We now try to match the needs of the families with the services we are able to provide effectively.

• Phase new children in gradually

All the children started the program on the first day, which gave the appearance of chaos. In the future, we would stagger the times, bringing in smaller groups at different times. This gives children the time to become familiar with the preschool environment before phasing in additional children.

As children move on to first grade or move out of the area, we add only one new child on any given day, thus helping the child to adjust more quickly to the preschool environment.

• Plan for the staff's mental health

Fairview Preschool was open from 6:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. during the regular school year and eight additional weeks in the summer. This looked good on paper, and the parents and children loved it. On the other hand, the staff experienced fatigue. They dedicated long hours to the children and came back many evenings to work with the parents. This was too intense. The staff needed time to recharge their batteries. We would recommend that a staff member spend no more than six hours per day directly with children. They should plan, evaluate, contact parents, clean, and so on, during the remainder of the day. At least one work day per month is now scheduled to use for staff development, planning, and enhancing the classroom environment.

• Plan behind-the-scenes logistics more thoroughly

The staff needs to focus on the children; they should not have to be involved in logistics. For example, it is easy to to schedule summer operations, but . . . Who will provide the meals and snacks? Who will provide substitutes for absent employees? Preschool programs produce several loads of wash per week. Is the staff expected to take it home or is there a readily accessible washer and dryer? You ask parents to provide extra clothes, you provide a variety of wheel toys and other large muscle development equipment. Is there adequate accessible storage? Students are involved in food preparation, and projects that require items like food coloring, cotton balls, or utensils from the store. Is there an easy way to purchase these with program funds?

• Fund a total program at one site before expanding

Having a one-classroom pilot demonstrates how a quality early childhood classroom should operate, but the logistics and expenses of operating one class make the program appear prohibitively expensive to replicate. We heard many times, "Well, we couldn't afford that" from visitors. If we had run a three-classroom program, as requested in our initial funding proposal, the program costs and responsibilities would have been divided among three classes. In addition:

- Different classes could cover early and late hours. All classes would not need double assistant coverage to be open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- One parent educator could work with parents from all classes. This would provide a larger pool of parents and make a more varied and well-attended program possible.
- Large pieces of equipment could be shared. This includes equipment such as a refrigerator and stove, large climbing toys, and wheel toys.

- Staff could provide mutual support. Having two state preschool pilots 250 miles apart did not allow teachers enough opportunities to plan and work together. Teachers had to go it alone as they demonstrated new and sometimes controversial concepts. Fortunately, Fairview's participation in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium helped alleviate this problem.

- **Prepare the principal**

Leadership of a preschool program requires a certain amount of expertise in the field of early childhood education. Although the Fairview principal was an advocate for early childhood programs, his lack of a degree or extensive experience in this area caused some initial discomfort for him. Meanwhile, the teacher carried the burden of maintaining the focus on the needs of young children and the ultimate goals of the early childhood program.

One example demonstrates the adjustment required of the principal. It involvesd the use of a record player. The principal felt the record player was too expensive to allow children to use it without direct adult supervision. The teacher insisted that operating the record player was the only way for the children to learn how to use it. She volunteered to buy a new one if the one in the class was broken. Amazingly, the children learned how to use the record player without breaking it, and the principal learned a different approach.

Multi-age Grouping Works

The State Department insisted that the pilot serve multi-age children. Once operational, it was easy to see that the children learned much from each other. The older children stimulated the 3-year-olds to try new things, and the older children learned leadership skills and self confidence through the interaction, which reinforced their own learning. All received learning experiences appropriate to their levels.

Mainstreaming Works in Preschool

Exceptional children moved successfully into the preschool setting because multi-age grouping allows them to find peers who are working on their level. The other preschoolers also quickly adjust to the exceptional children and gain from their presence. Many Fairview preschoolers now use sign language to communicate with their deaf friend and watch for obstacles that might cause their blind friend to fall.

Child-initiated Learning is Essential

Child-initiated learning is a key component of a developmentally appropriate program. This appeared to create chaos at first because most children had not had this experience. Too many decisions were made for them at home and at their previous child care settings. Now, having learned to make decisions, children easily plan their day and move freely through the classroom, choosing the materials they want to use. Children can and do help with everything possible including answering the phone, cleaning their environment, and getting lunch. The self confidence, responsibility, and independence of these children continue to grow, promoting harmony in the classroom community.

Summary

The North Carolina Preschool Pilot was established to be a model program demonstrating effective, research-based early childhood practices as outlined in the North Carolina Handbook, Circle of Childhood. Funding was provided by Chapter 2, through the State Department of Public Instruction, to hire staff and purchase the needed resources to realize the vision of a preschool housed in a public school setting.

Change in Attitude and Knowledge: Jackson Public School District Jackson, Mississippi

Elton Greer

The attitudes and knowledge regarding early childhood education have changed in the Jackson Public School District since it was selected and approved to participate in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium. Change has occurred in the early childhood curriculum, programs for 4-year-olds, evaluation philosophies and techniques for children ages 4-8, and parent training and involvement.

Prior to 1988, little was said in Jackson about developmental appropriateness; the guides set by our administrators and teachers lumped all children together. The efforts of the Jackson Consortium Team with the Early Children Consortium have helped this district to become more knowledgeable regarding appropriate early childhood practices and to place this knowledge into more widespread practice. At the Team's request, workshops were held during which information regarding appropriate practices was disseminated, and teachers were encouraged and empowered to do what many of them already knew to be best for children.

The early childhood curriculum in Jackson had been pushed downward, with more and more academic areas being focused on in kindergarten and 1st grade, because of a misconception that "earlier was better." Our early childhood curriculum has now been revised and made age appropriate. The superintendent, assistant superintendents, and principals encourage teachers to support learning through centers and cooperative experiences. The 1st and 2nd grade curriculums are theme-based and integrated. Reading instruction in the early grades focuses on a whole-language perspective. The learning center approach has been adopted in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade with centers incorporating inquiry, discovery, and direct instruction. Thus, children are actively involved in the learning process.

In 1988, Jackson had no programs for 4-year-olds. During the 1991-92 school year we established nine with a maximum of twenty pupils per class. These classes use a curriculum appropriate to the student's ages and developmental levels, and teachers use practices to build self-esteem and confidence. New furniture and new materials were purchased for each classroom, and the environment was made conducive to good early childhood practices. Jackson has committed to the addition of classes for 4-year-olds in all its schools.

Prior to 1988, Mississippi required that a standardized test be administered to 5-year-old kindergarten pupils each spring to measure the effectiveness of kindergarten programs. The state has since abandoned this idea. In Jackson, the reporting instruments are appropriate and multiple assessments are used, including teacher observational data, portfolios, checklists, and informal notes. Alternative assessments allow teachers to be more skillful "child watchers" and give children more opportunities to show what they can do in a variety of ways. These assessments deal with the child's total development and are valuable when making instructional decisions for individual children.

Before participating in the Early Childhood Consortium, Jackson had no systematic and consistent plan for parent training and involvement. Several schools now participate in the Quality Education Project, a parent training and involvement program. Our district places more emphasis on getting parents in the schools and inviting them to be a part of their child's learning process. Our superintendent has initiated dialogue with local Head Starts, and a spirit of collaboration among local education leaders and the community, which has enabled these people to work with the schools toward meeting the goals of early childhood education. Jackson conducts an annual survey of parents and community members to give district personnel a report card on how well we meet the needs of the community. The school district has maintained a strong Adopt-A-School program for ten years, and the program is now stronger and more viable than ever.

The Jackson Public School District has improved the services to our children ages 4-8 since our participation in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium. Staff development activities, staff members' attitudes, and

support from our superintendents have helped our Consortium Team to have an impact on early childhood education in our district. Our School Board has been informed of appropriate early childhood practices, and has been supportive of these endeavors. The Consortium effort was a rewarding professional experience for the Team members, but even more rewarding to the boys and girls of this school district who will be served by research-based, developmentally appropriate, early childhood practices.

Program and Curriculum Design: Lincolnwood School District Lincolnwood, Illinois

Mark Friedman

In Lincolnwood, Illinois, the school district decided to enroll in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium and to adapt their prescription for change to suit the needs of our ongoing program.

Demographics

Lincolnwood, Illinois, is an upper middle class, mostly single-family-home suburban community of 12,411 residents located immediately to the north of Chicago and surrounded by the villages of Skokie and Evanston. The close proximity to medical centers, the legal system, and the city's financial and business districts coupled with the small town environment of a suburban community, continue to attract large numbers of professionals. The population is 86.4 percent Caucasian, 0.1 percent African American, 9.6 percent Asian, East Indian and Pacific Islander, and 3.9 percent Hispanic.

While little has changed physically in the last fifteen years, the population has undergone a marked shift. An influx of Asian, East Indian, and Pacific Island residents has created a diverse, multicultural population. This is magnified by forty-one different languages spoken by students enrolled in the school district, which is designated School District #74.

The Program

While population diversity contributes to a 13.6 percent minority makeup in the village, School District #74 has seen its minority population increase to 33 percent of the total student population of 1,100. As older residents sell their homes, younger families with children and diverse backgrounds are replacing them. The philosophy of the Lincolnwood Board of Education has been to provide for all student needs with local funding and resources. The largest percentage of revenue for the operations budget comes from local property taxes. State and federal aid provide only 4.6 percent of the revenue. Current annual per pupil expenditures are $6,200.

School District #74's unique Early Childhood Education Program is located in Todd Hall School. It houses a district-operated prekindergarten, full-day kindergarten and an English-as-a-Second Language pull-out program. The total student population is approximately 275.

In addition to these programs, a private child care provider leases one wing of Todd Hall. This organization maintains programs for children from 6 weeks to 4 years old, as well as provide before- and after-school care for students in grades K-4 who attend Lincolnwood Schools. More than 100 children and families benefit from the presence of these privately run programs.

District #74, which has operated a developmental 4-year-old prekindergarten for almost twenty years, is certainly one of the first public school districts to offer this type program in Illinois. The design of Todd Hall School, an older building, reflects this early focus on early childhood education. It was built specifically as a primary building with the anticipation that no student older than 2nd-grade age would be there.

In 1982 declining enrollment forced the closing of the public school portion of Todd Hall, except for the district operated prekindergarten and four half-day kindergarten classes. In total, three classrooms were being used. All other space was designated for district warehousing, offered to community groups, or leased to the private child care provider. First grade classes moved to Rutledge Hall, which then housed grades 1–4.

Two years after the symbolic closing of Todd Hall, signs pointed toward an increase in enrollment. Because of the state focus on implementing good early childhood education programs also, the board of education directed the administration to commence a review of its entire early childhood education program and curriculum.

By the end of the summer of 1986, all physical elements were in place. Staff was hired, materials were ordered, and the building was prepared for the arrival of students.

Speedbumps

Along an apparently smooth path to creating a true Early Childhood Center, several speedbumps appeared. Some related to program content, and others were more philosophical.

The first was the belief of some parents that full-day kindergarten would not be in the best interests of their children. Anticipating this concern, district administrators held a series of meetings to address all concerns regarding full-day kindergarten. Recurrent themes related to length of school day and the role of academics.

Parents were also offered the choice of enrolling their children in a traditional half-day program or the new full day. Ninety-seven percent chose full day. To accommodate the three parents who chose a half-day program, one full-day classroom designed its schedule so that all elements of a half-day program were offered in the morning block.

In addition, class sizes were kept in the 20:1 ratio and half-time aides were hired for each classroom. Parents were encouraged and prodded to visit and observe throughout the year. Eventually, some of the biggest critics became full-day kindergarten boosters.

By the end of October, only one child remained in the half-day component. The fears of too long a day and a heavy dose of academics had been quickly put to rest.

The first year of Todd Hall's reopening was truly a learning experience for all. New faces included a principal, four newly hired and five relocated classroom teachers, a new physical education specialist, a new learning center/computer lab director, as well as teacher's aides, parent volunteers, and bus drivers.

Curriculum Design

Amid the many successes and speedbumps during the first year, one area cried out for attention: The need for consistency and continuity in curriculum design and implementation. The issue wasn't one of working together, it was one of developing a framework for all components of the program.

In the second year of operation, the chasm between philosophical direction and grade level autonomy seemed to grow. Administrators definitely needed to dig in and begin a process of program and curriculum identity encompassing all aspects of early childhood education in Lincolnwood.

First, they developed a mission statement that would reflect the board of education's agenda when reopening Todd Hall. A representative team of administrators and teachers composed this statement:

> It is the mission of Lincolnwood School District #74 to create a developmentally appropriate model Early Childhood Education Program reflecting current practices and research in the early childhood domain.

This was presented to the board of education and other early childhood staff and generally received favorable responses. However, some staff members questioned the true meaning of the term "developmentally appropriate" and wanted to know how it pertained to them.

Lincolnwood and ASCD

Fortunately, the expression of these staff concerns coincided with the district's application for inclusion in ASCD's Early Childhood Consortium. After being selected, the first task for each district was to design a five-year plan for early childhood education.

The highlights of Lincolnwood's plan included:

- Examining the early childhood learning environment to determine if programs were developmentally appropriate;
- Defining the District #74 Early Childhood Education Program as encompassing grades prekindergarten through two;
- Eliminating standardized testing in the first grade;
- Implementing a kindergarten screening program and defining the screening process for three and four year olds;
- Moving second grade to the primary building;
- Reaching out to meet the needs of the non-English-speaking population;
- Formalizing curriculum and ensuring that it is developmentally appropriate;
- Planning staff development activities;
- Creating a Early Childhood Curriculum Committee.

The first and third goals of year one were directed at providing a definition for, and information about, developmentally appropriate practices. The plan also called for staff development activities centered on developmentally appropriate practices, parent information programs, the creation of an article bank, reports to the board of education, the examination of curricular areas, and the creation of a permanent Early Childhood Curriculum Committee.

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Members of the consortium team conducted informational meetings to share the details and scheduled separate sessions with primary grade teachers, board members, parents, the press, and the district administrative team.

Although most components of the five-year plan were accepted, one element still troubled some 1st and 2nd grade teachers. They needed to understand what would be expected of them as teachers in a developmentally appropriate classroom. This issue turned out to be a major speedbump over the next three years.

These teachers felt that moving in this new direction was a rejection of successful teaching practices. After all, students in District #74 averaged in the 96th percentile nationally on the Stanford Achievement Test. While true at that time, there were signs that the changing nature of the student population was beginning to affect that statistic. Already, teachers at the intermediate grades were commenting on the lower levels of preparedness they were seeing in new students. Also, the lack of language proficiency displayed by some students was affecting their classroom performance negatively and presented new problems for teachers.

The Early Childhood Consortium Team felt that a more developmental philosophy could address the needs of individual students better. Also, the curriculum design and program development and the tenets of developmentally appropriate practices could be exported to grades 3–8.

To address the teachers' concerns, the Consortium Team held a series of awareness meetings to outline elements of a developmentally appropriate curriculum. They distributed information and showed a descriptive video. Their efforts seemed to bear fruit, but change did not occur overnight.

Staff development continues to be our major focus. Since 1986, we have had a 50 percent teacher turnover rate at the early childhood level. Obviously, it was imperative to address the needs of both new teachers and the more experienced staff.

Using a detailed, narrative needs assessment, we developed plans that encompassed several important areas. Some of topics selected were:

- Teaching without paper, pencils, and workbooks,
- Organizing curriculum at the early childhood level,
- Examining classroom organization and design,
- Examining developmental philosophy,
- Stressing multicultural awareness,
- Introducing whole language at the early childhood level,
- Asking what was developmentally appropriate,
- Observing the regular education initiative as it pertains to early childhood education,
- Using thinking skills at the early childhood level,
- Using math manipulatives in the early childhood classroom,
- Introducing the writing process,
- Using cooperative learning, and
- Conducting team visits to other model classrooms.

Of all the staff development activities, classroom visits have proven to be the most powerful tool for creating an awareness of good teaching practices and for finding new ideas. Even if a visit to another school did not translate into something new, it affirmed the good things that were going on in the various classrooms.

Historically, the curriculum development/design process in Lincolnwood calls for forming a committee to study one content area each year on a rotating basis. Teachers serve on the committee for one year and receive professional growth points, an internal system of required professional development activities.

In 1986, a formal cycle of curriculum development was adopted with the enthusiastic approval of the board of education, thus beginning the process of creating curriculum guides.

A formal structure for developing the curriculum guide was implemented. This process helped to focus on the creation of an up-to-date, usable curriculum guide based on the latest research and practice with input from teachers at all grade levels. However, to ensure that issues pertinent to the early childhood staff were addressed, two representatives from each K-2 grade sat on each committee.

Formal Lincolnwood Curriculum Design Process:

1. Assistant Superintendent announces the formation of a committee to focus on a specific area. (Spring)
2. Principals solicit volunteers from staff. (Spring)
3. Assistant Superintendent solicits volunteers from ancillary staff. (Spring)
4. Committee membership is announced. (Spring)

5. Calendar of meetings is developed. (Spring)
6. If needed, consultant contacts are made and services are arranged. (Summer)
7. Article/research bank on topic is developed. (Summer)
8. Committee begins formal process with a review of existing curriculum/programs. Consultants may begin inservice at this time. (Fall)
9. Outline of goals is created—Where are we going with the new curriculum? (Fall)
10. A consensus mission statement or statement of philosophy is developed to guide the writing process. (Fall)
11. An outline of curriculum content and format is designed, including a scope and sequence. (Fall)
12. Grade level representatives work with colleagues to write content, objectives or outcomes. (Fall/Winter)
13. Draft of curriculum content is reviewed. (Winter)
14. Textbooks and related supplemental materials are examined in relation to curriculum draft. (Winter)
15. Textbook adoption recommendations are sent to Board of Education. (Spring)
16. Curriculum draft is refined for staff and board approval. (Spring)
17. Staff development/implementation plans are designed. (Spring)
18. Evaluation plans are formulated. (Spring)
19. New curriculum is printed for distribution. (Summer)

Throughout the curriculum design process, representatives from the early childhood grades work to identify content that is developmentally appropriate. Appropriate content views learning as an active, exploratory and creative process built around the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical stages of development that children move through in their early years.

The tone set by the early childhood representatives creates a sequence that is followed through to the 8th grade. It is not uncommon to hear middle school teachers talk about addressing the developmental needs of pre-teens and teenagers.

The completed process is similar to building a skyscraper: Lay the foundation first; then add floors. The foundation of Lincolnwood's curriculum will always be its Early Childhood Program and the developmental needs of the young child.

Program Design

In addition to completing one entire curriculum design cycle, other new programs have been added to early childhood services. Full-day kindergarten was quickly followed by developmentally appropriate physical education.

Lincolnwood's early childhood physical education program encompasses the physical, social, mental, and emotional characteristics expected of kindergarten and 1st grade students. Children are actively involved in developmentally appropriate exercises throughout their 30-minute daily program. This isn't a "throw out the ball and let them play" approach; it is a well-planned sequence of classes geared to building on individual needs.

Another new program, Project Prevent, uses a one-to-one tutorial approach to address the needs of 1st grade students reading below grade level. The District #74 Reading Coordinator, works cooperatively with reading department staff from National-Louis University and a cadre of trained tutors to provide students with 20 minutes of prescribed reading assistance each day. The District #74 Early Childhood Curriculum Committee has developed a K-2 report card that reflects developmental philosophy. Once the final copy is reviewed by the board of education, it will be implemented during the 1991-92 school year.

The Early Childhood Curriculum Committee has also recommended the creation of an Early Childhood Unit (preK-2) to be housed in Todd Hall.

Supported by the board of education, this controversial proposal would necessitate moving six 2nd grade classes from the intermediate school to the existing early childhood unit. It would also mean that there would not be space available to accommodate the private day care program.

If the question were just to comply with the goals outlined in the Early Childhood Mission Statement, it would be easy. However, many Lincolnwood families use the the private day care services and would be upset if they were no longer available. This could truly be a no-win situation.

Ultimately, the board decided that meeting the needs of the school age population was the primary concern. Other programs would have to come second.

They directed district architects to design an expansion of Todd Hall School with provisions for adding space for day care services. Of course, the biggest speedbump, available funding, determines how far the district may go.

Finally, state-of-the-art technology has come to the early childhood program in Lincolnwood. Todd Hall houses the district's only Macintosh computer laboratory, which is supported by a plethora of classroom computers and related software. Also, CD ROM players as well as laser discs and the latest audiovisual equipment have been incorporated into the daily routine of the early childhood education program. Children receive their first "hands-on" experience with technology at the prekindergarten level and build on that as they move through the grades.

The catalysts for incorporating technology into the program were a knowledgeable, dedicated, Learning Center Director at Todd Hall School, and a committed, well-versed District Technology Coordinator. Early on, these two staff members realized the benefits of exposure to technology at the early childhood level.

The District Technology and Early Childhood Curriculum Committees pushed for the inclusion of new technologies in classrooms at all grade levels. Feeding the early childhood need was the curriculum design model adopted by the District. Curriculum development begins at the early childhood level and builds throughout the grades.

Looking Back/Looking Ahead

Since its beginnings, our district's early childhood education program has come a long way. Some of the more obvious indicators are:

- A well-defined mission statement drives the program.
- The district now has an Early Childhood Center.
- The term DAP (developmentally appropriate practices) doesn't scare people any more.
- The Lincolnwood community is informed about issues related to early childhood education.
- Testing at the early childhood level has been deemphasized.
- Curriculum models and assessment systems focusing on developmentally appropriate practice at the K-2 levels have been created.
- Class size and the student-to-adult ratio have been reduced.
- A child-centered approach to planning and delivering instruction has become more evident.
- Other educators look to District #74 as an innovative, trend-setting school district when it comes to early childhood education.
- Change was more difficult than anticipated.

In looking to the future, it is important that District #74 build on the sound foundation for early childhood education already in place. We will address areas and issues that include a strong focus on staff development for teachers, support staff, and administrators, followed by an emphasis on developing a sound parent awareness program.

The concept of developmentally appropriate practice will no longer be a buzzword but will continue to act as a driving force in the planning and design of curriculum. Teacher and members of the Lincolnwood community will feel comfortable with this term.

Students will develop a strong sense of positive self esteem to accompany basic concept development with the instructional focus on the individual child. Openness and collegial sharing and support will be characteristic and developmentally appropriate activities will be a part of all programmatic areas including art, music, and physical education. Assessment will be nontraditional and cover all disciplines.

In the future, our program will serve as a model for other schools and districts. Lincolnwood will play a clinical role for teachers, administrators, and community members of the other school systems as they move to create early childhood education centers.

Since 1986, Lincolnwood District #74 has rapidly moved forward in the area of early childhood program and curriculum development. Participation in ASCD's Early Childhood Consortium has helped to raise levels of awareness and to serve as a catalyst for necessary change.

Change, no matter how small or inconsequential it may seem, is fraught with speedbumps. Lincolnwood is the perfect example, as sometimes the small, unexpected detail turned out to be the biggest obstacle.

The ability to overcome obstacles and look positively to the future are important characteristics of all the involved parties in our district. It is critical that all parties be on the same wavelength.

The Board has never been afraid to go out on a limb to do what is best for children. The administration, led by a supportive, proactive superintendent and committed principals and assistant principals, leaves no stone unturned in its quest to do everything possible for children. The dedicated teaching staff

strives for excellence on all fronts, and classified personnel are supportive and caring in the provision of services to children. Input from all parties is desired and respected.

All of these components have enabled the Lincolnwood School District to lay a foundation for a model Early Childhood Education Program. Although there will be more speedbumps along the way, with everyone continuing to work together, the future looks brighter than ever.

Teacher-Initiated Change: Muscatine Community School District Muscatine, Iowa

Julie Herold, Polly Levine

A port city on the Mississippi River in southeastern Iowa, Muscatine has more ethnic and socioeconomic diversity than most communities in the state. Although a small town, it is unique as an agricultural and industrial center because many of the industries founded in Muscatine retain their international headquarters there. Businesses work with the schools through an Adopt-A-School program and other alliances that focus on educational excellence, at-risk programming, and substance abuse.

Demographics

Muscatine's population of 23,000 supports a community college, private preschools, and parochial elementary schools. The Muscatine Community School District's budget of $26,000,000 operates nine elementary schools (grades PS-5), two middle schools (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12). The total student population is 5,576 with 450 in kindergarten and 85 in at-risk and special education preschools. The general fund provides $725,000 for kindergarten costs; federal and state funds and grants provide $480,000 for all other early education.

The percentage of students participating in the free or reduced lunch program is 34.5 percent with three buildings exceeding 70 percent. The percentage of minorities in the schools is 2.5 percent black, Asian, other; 11.3 percent Hispanic origin; and 86 percent white, not of Hispanic origin. The distribution generally in Iowa is 2.8 percent; 1.2 percent; and 96.6 percent respectively.

There are more than 300 certified teachers and 20 (17.0 full-time equivalent) are assigned to early childhood. An Iowa teaching certificate with an early childhood endorsement has been required since 1987. Sixteen trained aides (8.0 FTE) and an early childhood coordinator (0.3 FTE) work with the teachers in the seven programs. Staff to student ratios range from 1:4 or fewer in infant and special education programs and 1:8 in preschools, to 1:20.1 in the kindergartens.

Significant strengths of the public school system are (a) the desire for change and (b) a proactive central administration. The district has its own instructional, curriculum, and leadership models that unify teachers and administrators in a common goal to advance ownership education uniformly throughout the district. Teacher empowerment is encouraged. Site-based decision making is being implemented. Among a wide range of changes instituted since 1986 are the early childhood initiatives that include educational support services for families of infants and toddlers, an infant care center with teenage parent services at the high school, preschools, prekindergarten, extended day kindergartens, and kindergarten tutorial assistants.

> *Ten years ago kindergarten had become a junior first grade. We basically were on our own. I can't remember an administrator being with us . . . Having a direct line to central administration has been very beneficial. We have had time to do things "right." Kindergarten teachers in Muscatine have a strong commitment to early childhood education.*
>
> Bonnie Schmelzer, kindergarten teacher
> Muscatine, Iowa

> *A parent asked his child what he had learned in kindergarten today. The child responded, "Nothing, we just played." After observing his child and listening to his comments, the father replied, "The day you stop playing, I'll begin to worry."*

Moving a district from highly academic kindergarten and preschool handicap programs to developmentally appropriate early childhood programs is no small task, but eleven kindergarten teachers did just that. Enthusiastically, they persevered and accomplished what had seemed unattainable. They proved that by identifying values, gaining administrative support, and sustaining the impetus, teachers can move districts to dramatic change.

In the early 1980s, new kindergarten teachers who entered the Muscatine Community School system found a group of teachers who were ready to change

education for the young child. But in each newly assigned classroom they faced stacks of workbooks on reading, math, and handwriting. To pass to 1st grade, a child had to successfully master at least three levels of reading. There were no blocks, no large motor equipment, no easels, nor dramatic play areas. The daily schedule did not allow adequate socialization or learning through play.

The number of frustrated children who found little success in the rigid, artificial academic environment was discouraging. On their own time, the concerned teachers began meeting to support each others' efforts and share ideas that would make a difference. They identified areas of concern—the rigid curriculum, formal teacher-directed classrooms, suppressed creativity, scholastic competency levels that exceeded social development, and lack of administrative guidance or support. Gradually, they established group values that would sustain them through the challenge ahead.

Persistently, teachers met with central office administrators to explain what education in kindergarten should be. Eventually, one administrator heard their concerns and gave them the support they needed to proceed. Acknowledging the teachers as the experts on early childhood, she met with them for a year to establish interim procedures to help children with immediate needs during the change process.

The district took these initial steps to prepare for change:

- Increasing staff development for kindergarten teachers;
- Inviting community preschool directors to informational meetings;
- Speaking to parents at preschool gatherings; and
- Appointing an elementary principal to coordinate teacher efforts.

Staff Development/Teacher Empowerment

Nationwide, kindergarten, if it existed at all, was often isolated from the mainstream of education. Left to their own initiatives and often without resources to establish nurturing environments, teachers were expected to mold each 5-year-old into a 1st grader regardless of the child's level of development. Children who did not fit the mold by the end of the year were retained. Generally school philosophies gave little consideration to how a young child learns. *Play as the business of childhood had little or no place in the classroom.*

Longitudinal studies have helped to focus a closer look at early childhood education (Schweinhart, Weikart, and Larner 1986). The nation began taking a look at early childhood education. Federal and state initiatives have centered on the young child. With larger bodies of research available to add credibility to what the teachers already knew, change could be based on actual knowledge.

Staff development was the best way to impart the latest early education information to kindergarten teachers. The assistant superintendent encouraged attendance at seminars and the state and regional conferences of the Association for the Education of Young Children. Six early dismissal dates were devoted to working collegially with the appointed building administrator (who later became the Early Childhood Coordinator).

With teacher empowerment, grade level meetings clarified unity of purpose that grew into complete ownership. Reaching a consensus on each issue strengthened decision making. Research was discussed, goals were set, and ways to begin modifying the existing program were shared. Teachers shared relevant conference and seminar training.

One of the most beneficial outcomes of the kindergarten level sessions was the encouragement among peers to take the risks involved in beginning to use appropriate practices. Having common values, beliefs, and goals does not eliminate the apprehension that accompanies implementing change; however, mutual support and encouragement allows individuals to assume the responsibility of empowerment.

The Early Childhood Coordinator acted as a facilitator in building consensus and provided direction within district guidelines. To establish credibility with the kindergarten teachers, the coordinator not only to listen to the teachers, but also studied current literature, attended conferences, and took intensive classes in early childhood curriculum.

Planning for Success: Involving All Actors

Lasting change from within an organization requires time for study, exploration, self-evaluation, and redirection to ensure that all parties have an opportunity to assimilate and internalize what is happening. Understanding this, the group planned a three- to

five-year frame to move from goal setting to full implementation.

To their great satisfaction, the teachers transformed the kindergartens from junior 1st grades with consumable texts, worksheets, and frustrated students in 1986 to child-centered learning environments with unit-based curriculum and liberated children in 1989. Kindergarten teachers spent summers writing thematic units for districtwide use and developed a curriculum guide and reporting system that reflects what happens in the classroom. To maintain program vitality requires continuous revision and refining.

Rather than a formal instrument for screening entering students, they developed alternative methods of developmental screening, which are less stressful. Each spring all children who will enter school in the fall attend a simulation of kindergarten in small groups at their neighborhood attendance center. Teachers identify individual needs through observation of student participants in standardized activities. As a result, only a few children require formal assessment. All children who are 5 by September 15 may enter kindergarten, but the formal screen provides data to help teachers and parents decide which programming will best suit the child's level of development.

During the school year, assessment consists of observations, checklists, and anecdotal records. Progress is reported to parents at fall and spring conferences and in written form at the end of each semester.

The work of the kindergarten teachers has become the springboard for curriculum writing and a model for teacher empowerment throughout the district. Administrators and teachers K-12 realize that what is happening in early childhood directly impacts education in Muscatine.

Whose Involvement Ensures Success?

Teachers, administrators, the board of education, parents, community preschools and agencies, the general public—all must be informed and encouraged to provide feedback.

Teachers: The experts closest to the action are the teachers. They establish the core values for the group, assume the responsibility of ownership, set goals, identify appropriate student outcomes appropriate, develop a plan of action, implement the plan, and evaluate and redirect as the plan progresses.

Administrators: Central office support is crucial to successful implementation. Central administration sets and models expectations for administrators during the change. Fortunately, Muscatine's superintendent of schools is the superintendent who originally supported the teacher-initiated change. District expectations are that all principals attend inservices related to developmental education and that the Early Childhood coordinator provide relevant information regularly at principals' meetings. The Early Childhood coordinator also develops materials to assist principals at parent orientation.

Board Members: To ensure more informed decisions on developmental education, at least one board member is involved in the change process in order to educate other members. Muscatine is fortunate to have a former kindergarten teacher as a board member. She has served on a number of early childhood teams, including ASCD's Early Childhood Consortium team, and chaired a subcommittee of the Community Early Childhood Committee mandated by the state of Iowa.

Parents: Including parents on work committees, having them help disseminate information, and provide feedback ensures that the parent perspective is considered throughout the process.

Other Audiences: Colleagues such as community preschool and Head Start directors meet with school personnel to discuss their role and how they may be affected by the change. They can offer opportunities for teachers and the coordinator to speak at parent meetings, and may prove a strong source of support when they are aware that schools value their work as professionals.

The Early Childhood coordinator speaks to agencies, associations, and businesses about the importance of early childhood programs. Their representatives are also included on appropriate committees.

The Children: Five-year-olds become the best ambassadors when the new curriculum is implemented. They enjoy school more, become less disruptive, and learn more willingly. Their parents learn to appreciate the program through them.

Steps to Consider: It Starts with You

1. Compare your program to what you know is best for young children. Remember that you are the expert, so be well-read in current literature.
2. Find support among other kindergarten and

primary teachers. Begin networking with other early childhood educators in and out of district.

3. Formally and informally discuss appropriate practices with other teachers. Share ideas and activities. Encourage teamwork. Remain nonjudgmental, gain trust, and maintain credibility.
4. Discuss early childhood education with your principal, formally or informally, and share current literature such as the position statement on appropriate practices developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Invite the principal to view an age/individual appropriate activity in your classroom. Take time to explain what student behaviors and outcomes to look for in the activity.

   Lobby to be allowed to implement more appropriate activities in the classroom.

   Show the principal how concrete activities can replace worksheets and why they are relevant to the way a child learns.
5. Be sensitive to possible resistance and apprehension among staff members. Be patient, positive, professional. Develop your interpersonal skills to build a collegial atmosphere for you and others.
6. Share current literature with central administration. Find someone who will listen to you. Ask to discuss early childhood education with them. Persist in a professional, informed manner.
7. Volunteer for school community committees that will give you an opportunity to advocate for the young child.
8. Approach a board member who has a young child or who shows interest in early education.
9. Involve parents in any age/individual appropriate activity that you do. Explain what outcomes you expect.
10. During parent meetings, share what is appropriate for the developmental stage of their children. Help them understand how young children learn. Build on parent strengths to gain support.
11. Send home regular newsletters that include a developmental learning activity or a piece of relevant early childhood information. Become acquainted with local preschool and Head Start teachers. Develop a child advocate network with them.
12. Do not become discouraged. Persist. Be confident that you can make a difference.

The Challenges Continue

District challenges that continue are to:

- Maintain a high level of support among elementary and secondary administrators.
- Encourage secondary schools to be prepared for the impact that the change will make on their delivery system.
- Sustain central office and board support.
- Assist other primary teachers with understanding the new kindergarten curriculum and its benefits.
- Continue education of all audiences, especially parents.
- Maintain a sense among early childhood teachers that the change is never complete; to keep the program vital, revision and refinement are continuous.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Portland Public Schools Portland, Oregon

Rebecca Severeide

Before joining the ASCD Consortium, the Portland District engaged in some serious deliberations. Developing a districtwide understanding of quality early childhood education within a diverse, large city school system would be a long-term, ardous task. To achieve success, we built two components into our plan: (1) Develop a districtwide awareness of developmentally appropriate practice in prekindergarten through grade 2, and (2) Encourage staff reflection at individual school sites.

The plan, which started as a three-year plan, has been extended for five more years. The deeply held value of program diversity and the administrative structure that supports this value made it difficult for staff to perceive developmentally appropriate practice as a set of guidelines that could fit a wide variety of early childhood program models. An overview of the district puts the need for our long-term approach into perspective.

Demographics

By national standards, Portland's urban school district is medium-sized. However, with 56,000 students, prekindergarten-grade 12, it is the largest district in Oregon and part of the nation's network of big city schools.

Most of the children in our community attend public schools; the population is mixed, with ethnic and language diversity growing. The current minority population is approximately 28 percent. The district's ethnic makeup is:

European American	72.1%
African American	15.2%
Hispanic American	3.0%
Asian American	7.6%
Native American	2.1%

Non-English-speaking groups number over forty and represent approximately 15 percent of the families served in the district. Although a small part of the total population, minority groups are growing rapidly and are actively involved in the schools.

The number of children served in the early childhood years (prekindergarten through 2) is approximately 15,200, 8.5 percent of the total school population. Distribution in the early childhood grades is: prekindergarten, 1,700; kindergarten, 4,450; 1st grade, 4,550; and 2nd grade, 4,500.

Structure

The Portland District has two major organizational structures: (1) clusters of elementary and middle schools that feed into one of eleven high schools, and (2) central support offices—curriculum, research and evaluation, special education, student services. Leadership from these two strands report directly to the superintendent. The structure supports 63 elementary buildings, 19 middle schools, as well as the 11 high schools.

Curricular Innovations

Curricular innovations may be initiated by central departments, by cluster offices, or buildings. Portland has a history of many program options initiated by all three groups, some alone and some in collaborative projects. At the early childhood level, multiple options exist. The wide array of options speaks to how program diversity has been valued in the district. Some of the major district program options for young children are:

- Traditional elementary
- Eclectic models based on active learning
- Problem solving
- Head Start
- Mainstreamed and self-contained special education
- Montessori
- Art Magnet
- Foreign language immersion in Japanese and Spanish

- High Scope
- Reading Recovery
- Mixed-age grouping

The program options reflect a consistent movement toward holistic curriculum and understanding of cultural perspectives. The district has used a hands-on/manipulative approach to mathematics for several years. It is also making the transition to an integrated whole language system in which content areas are centered around key concepts, and baseline essays on different geo-cultural groups are used to help staff infuse multiple histories and perspectives. This curriculum is not yet formally integrated.

Resources

Being the largest district in the state means having services and needs not common in smaller cities or rural areas. Some of the services available are district-funded staff development classes, program evaluation staff, English-as-a-second-language services, special education support for mainstreamed children, and media services, such as extensive audiovisual materials, professional libraries, and computer technology.

These services are paid for primarily out of general district funds generated from local and state taxes, with limited federal funds. Most of our K-12 programs are paid for with general funds; however, prekindergarten is funded with multiple funding streams—general funds, Chapter 1, Head Start, and State Prekindergarten and Early Intervention programs. The average money expended per child to provide this level of support is:

prekindergarten,	$3300 - $4500 (varies by program)
kindergarten	$3200
grades 1 and 2	$5000

Resources are distributed through central funds and building funds. Central funds cover general operating costs such as textbooks, staff development, library services, and special education. Buildings are covered by a consolidated budget that is allocated by the principal to meet building needs. Site-based management has not yet come to Portland, but staff leadership does dictate some of the building funds.

Promoting Change

The size, history of promoting diverse program options, and administrative structure of the Portland district have made it a formidable place for promoting a districtwide guiding philosophy in early childhood. As mentioned earlier, Portland's approach incorporated two key components: Centralized, long-term awareness building and a self-study process to promote understanding and ownership at the building level.

Centralized Awareness Building

Building awareness of developmentally appropriate practice started long before a formal plan was there to guide it. We decided to take advantage of the slow, but steady, process that was already in place. Staff development offerings and a movement toward curriculum adoptions that used fewer text materials and more activity already existed. A formal plan focused the effort, increased consistency, and encouraged central curriculum staff to be part of the plan.

Staff Development. The staff development effort took many forms: introductory classes, study groups, district-sponsored conferences, course offerings and summer institutes coordinated with a local university, and newsletters with consistent messages about the early childhood classroom. The planning process helped to eliminate after-school workshops and to focus more on classes and study groups. Even isolated events such as conferences had a similar research-based message. Examples of some themes we used were:

- Guided play as a teaching strategy;
- Anti-bias curriculum approaches for spelling tests, the role of phonics, and retention;
- Developing a whole language classroom;
- Informal assessment; and
- Building cooperative behaviors in children.

Central curriculum staff worked hard to send a consistent message about what young children were like and how best to teach them. The message also helped staff see that although the specifics of learning may change from age 4 to age 8, similar active learning strategies are needed throughout the early childhood years.

Adoption Cycle. The state of Oregon works on a seven-year textbook adoption cycle, with a new content area each year. Despite the state list of approved materials, the Portland District has been able to make its own decisions about adoption materials. The proc-

ess historically has focused on content textbooks.

Given young children's need for a more integrated and active approach, we elected to look at nontraditional materials, such as multicultural dolls, that could be used in more than one content area in addition to text and trade books. Multicultural dolls "live in housekeeping corners" and "go shopping in classroom-constructed grocery stores." But, the dolls also are for bathing in water, for eating at tables to teach health, for telling family stories in social studies, and for comparing skin tones in art prints from different cultures.

Another example is the adoption of unit blocks through grade 2 for use in mapmaking in social studies; for concrete math experiences with fractions, proportion, and area; and for the creation of story maps in language arts. Bringing a few materials at a time into the schools allows us to train teachers to use materials in an integrative manner.

The second part of the adoption process has been the writing foundation documents called frameworks. The frameworks provide a systematic look at major concepts or themes within a content area, including social development as it relates to the content. They serve a dual purpose in Portland: (1) they *are* the curriculum and (2) they form the criteria that helps evaluate the adoption materials used to teach the concepts in the framework.

At this point, the curriculum frameworks are still divided into content areas, but each now overlaps with other areas, and initial discussion on how to make a unified framework in grades prekindergarten-through-2 has begun. This future project is expected to move grades prekindergarten through two toward a more integrated approach with the outcome of a more focused and age-appropriate curriculum.

Self-Study Process

Even though centralized leadership is important, the work of translating quality program standards into the classroom happens at the building level. Although many Portland teachers have attended staff development offerings focused on developmentally appropriate practice, they have not always had the opportunity to reflect on their practices and compare it to a standard. We thought this was most likely to happen at the building where they have daily opportunities to talk to colleagues. To encourage building-level reflection, we designed a self-study tool patterned from the accreditation self-study document developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The Tool and Process. The Portland tool added 1st and 2nd grades to the NAEYC document and adjusted it for the demands of public education. The tool has detailed standards of excellence in six areas of a school program:

- Interaction between staff and children
- Physical environment
- Health and safety
- Parent/community involvement
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment

The process takes about a year of twice-monthly meetings, most commonly staff meetings. However, a staff can elect to carry out the study on their own time and receive college credit for study group work. The four parts of the process are:

- The principal agrees to undergo a self-study and works with the staff to select (a) peer facilitator(s) to expedite the process.
- The facilitator(s) conduct regular meetings for the staff to discuss the criteria and related professional readings.
- The staff rate themselves on how they think they measure up to the standard under discussion.
- Using consensus techniques, the principal and staff agree on how to include areas rated low in a building improvement plan.

A Pilot Study. Three schools participated during the pilot year, and other schools have since started the process. Although each school had a different climate and set of needs, all made more progress during the self study than anticipated. Schools seldom waited to complete the self study prior to initiating some changes. The changes then spurred them on.

The pilot study showed that the principal's leadership, although subtle, was important. The principals needed to agree to avoid superseding the special agenda at the meetings with other agenda items and not to attend discussions when their presence would be perceived as a staff evaluation. When debriefed by facilitators, principals offered suggestions for meeting goals, asked for leadership training, and made positive comments about the project during larger staff meetings.

The total self-study process proved successful for several reasons, most likely in combination. Progress

occurred because staff had time to talk to each other about their practices, building trust and relationships. They also perceived the principal's direct support. Many of their current practices were validated as they found they met high quality standards. The study also allowed them to agree philosophically with most of the standards they did not meet and further motivated them to alleviate the differences. The self-study process allowed legitimate debates of professional differences and encouraged examination of the origins of their beliefs. Finally, the process offered the staff an opportunity to provide meaningful input into building improvement plans. As all of these factors worked together, change occurred, and cohesion was built.

Conclusion

The self-study process promoted a climate of professionalism and meshed with other districtwide staff development efforts to promote developmentally appropriate practice for young children. At the same time these components did not undermine other efforts to maintain or promote diversity. To the contrary, the process provided guidelines on how to best serve young children.

Diversity of Early Childhood Book
Portland, Oregon

Betty Campbell

Boise-Eliot is an early childhood education center with 790 pre-kindergarten to 5th grade students between the ages of 4 and 12. We are one of seven early childhood education centers in the inner city of Portland. We are ethnically diverse and have additional resources from general funds to achieve voluntary integration/desegregation.

Getting Parents Involved

Boise-Eliot encourages and expects each of the families of its 4-year-old children to come to a conference at the center to see first-hand where the children experience learning. We have daytime conferences and an evening family information meeting. Getting parents to attend sometimes requires several phone calls or a home visit but with perseverance we usually get 100 percent attendance at these parent-teacher conferences where we often use translators for families who speak a language other than English and are sure to provide wheelchair access. It is of paramount importance during our first contact with parents that we listen and respect them. No amount of written communication can replace this personal contact.

Fields trips are another way we get families involved in our school in a non-threatening way. We have found it helpful to offer childcare for parents attending field trips or otherwise spending time in the school. Over the past ten years we have been able to increase childcare from one to five days per week during school hours for parent volunteers. Last year we recorded over 8,800 volunteer hours.

Our Child Development Specialist offers day and evening parenting and anger management classes and does a Family Night on Mondays, opening our gym, library, and computer lab to our parents and the rest of the community.

We have a weekly newsletter called "Lovepats" that goes home every Friday. Students edit and word process the newsletter along with a teacher who receives extended responsibility pay for the task. Most classrooms also do at least a monthly, one-page newsletter that describes the particular curriculum for that month at that level.

Getting the Community Involved

We define community as more than the immediate families of our children. Our definition includes business and other members of the area surrounding our school. Business partnerships and tours are ways to bring community members into schools. Our school currently has partnerships with U.S. West, AVIA, Sixth Man Foundation, Security Pacific, and 3M. Parents and members of businesses volunteer as mentor tutors who spend a minimum of 30 minutes each week tutoring the same child from grades 1 through 5 and ideally through the rest of their schooling. We ask teachers to identify specific skills in reading or math for the tutorials to focus on.

We introduce people to our school and volunteer program through our Celebration of Cultures in early March each year. This event, which attracts between 3,000 and 4,000 people, is a culmination of the cultural studies curriculum in place in all thirty-two classrooms. The Celebration last two hours on a Friday evening and provides participants with a passport to each room in the school to see children's work related to the country or concept they are studying. We also hold an Open House in September and honor grandparents and special friends.

Getting families and community members involved is a long, slow process of building respect and trust. Our early childhood program has been building and refining such respect and trust for twenty-seven years under two principals. We have found that the leadership of a visible principal is crucial to our success. The continuity in leadership and staffing has certainly paid off in building communication, trust, and respect between parents, the community, and our school.

Our early childhood education center budget supports a Community Agent who acts as our volunteer coordinator and liaison between students' homes and the school. The Agent signs parents up to help with vision and dental screening, regularly makes home visits related to attendance and health, and coordinates service projects such as holiday food baskets and gift certificates to families in need. And because many grandparents are raising their grandchildren, our

Agent and educational assistants started a monthly Grandparents Support group, which provides discussions about topics such as "how to organize six children for school in the morning," and brings in guest speakers from human service groups to answer questions. This has grown from four to sixteen foster and grandparents in six months.

Integrating Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment Practices: Redwood City School District Redwood, California

Betty Casey, Linda Espinosa

This report discusses the conditions and events that led one school district in California to create an intensified preschool and developmentally appropriate primary program. It also presents the process used to create a model early childhood/primary center that embraced and practiced the principles of developmentally appropriate practices. Some of the issues we initially addressed were: governance and supervision, specific curriculum elements, child assessment, observational techniques, and program evaluation.

Demographics

The Redwood City School District is a mid-sized preschool through 8th grade district of approximately 8,000 students with a large Hispanic student population. The district is located in a suburban area approximately 25 miles south of San Francisco.

The Program

The Redwood City School came to a crossroads during the 1985-86 school year. Struggling financially, the district had to decide whether or not to continue child development and preschool programs that had been heavily subsidized by the state. The amount of the state contract was not keeping pace with expenses, and the programs were threatening to "encroach" on the district's general fund. Many other districts in California were turning their child development contracts back to the State Department of Education and discontinuing their preschool programs.

In California, the state-funded Child Development and State Preschool programs provide full-day child care and half-day preschool programs for children from low-income families. The programs provide high quality child care and enriched preschool experiences for young children who would otherwise be considered "at risk" in future school efforts. Throughout Redwood City, the district provided services for approximately 300 children whose families met the eligibility requirements.

The school board and central administration had to judge the value of the programs to the district as a whole and whether the additional cost was justified when other programs were being reduced. Two years of public hearings, staff meetings, research analysis, and serious discussions ensued. After reviewing the district's mission, its long-term goals, and the major challenges of a changing student population, the school board and superintendent recommended not only to continue the programs, but also to intensify the preschool program and to expand the early childhood practices into primary grades.

This decision to strengthen the preschool program and integrate its practices into the primary grades was the result of several converging factors. First, the academic achievement levels and dropout rates of our minority students were of concern. In addition, more and more of our students were viewed as disadvantaged or "at risk." To prepare children for succeeding in a complex information-based future, the basic school curriculum needed to change. Finally, in the education community at large, our early childhood programs were becoming widely known.

Following the recommendations of the superintendent and the school board, we created a new position—Director of Primary Education—and began the Primary Initiative. After a year of fumbling and false starts, we developed a mission statement and action plan. Our plan contained two critical features:

1. The goals of the primary initiative were central, not peripheral, to the district's larger mission; they were requisite for every students' long-term success.
2. An early childhood expert was hired in a high-status, high profile position to guide and lead this program.

Our other key decision was to focus our resources and attention initially on creating one model site—the

Primary Education Center (PEC). This one facility would house a child development program that included full-day child care for low income families, a preschool program, and six kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms.

By housing all features of this program under one roof with one Early Childhood Education administrator in charge, we increased the likelihood of achieving *one* integrated, comprehensive program that was successful.

Initially we knew that we *did not* want: standardized testing, workbooks or dittos, isolated skills instruction, tracking, and reliance on the traditional scope and sequence provided by the district. Basically, we wanted to avoid the mind and spirit deadening practices of a traditional model of early education.

It was actually more difficult to identify what we *did* want: Would we use the textbooks at all? If so, how? What curriculum standards would we adopt or develop? How could we demonstrate success? How would we monitor progress?

At that time, 1987-88, there were no developmentally appropriate curriculum guidelines for the primary grades. Whole language teaching practices were implemented inconsistently in the district, and schoolwide standardized test scores were the only objective measure of success. Recognizing the trailblazing nature of our task, we set out to develop our own curriculum standards and assessment procedures.

Curriculum Elements

First, we had to achieve consensus on our values and beliefs. After considerable discussion and debate we agreed to the following philosophical tenets:

- Children *construct* knowledge from their past experiences.
- Individual strengths need to be incorporated into the daily curriculum.
- All children have an intrinsic need to learn how the world works.
- Each child's self-concept and disposition to learn must be nurtured.
- Teaching is really about collaborative learning.

Once we achieved a common view of our task at hand, we could then develop our curriculum. It is important to note that these values and beliefs should be reviewed and revised on a systematic basis.

We recognized early on that although site-based decision making or collaborative team building requires additional time built into the school year, it is valuable because the staff become experts and advocates of the program. Fortunately, we acquired several small grants and used our school discretionary funds to support release time for teachers to plan and for staff development activities.

During the second year, the K-2 staff spent three full days deciding on what we felt was important for children ages 4 to 7. We reviewed the district's curriculum scope and sequence, the state curriculum frameworks, and the developmental norms of that age group to come to our final list. This process was indeed a struggle, but well worth the effort. Once we agreed on the *what* —the curriculum goals and the *whys* —the philosophy and values—we were able to develop the *how*—an integrated, theme-based curriculum for the PEC. The specific elements that we agreed on included:

- A literature-based early reading program.
- A hands-on mathematics program.
- "Plan-Do-Review" time for preschool through 1st grade. This reflected our strong commitment to giving children choices over their learning during some part of the day and valuing their intrinsic motivation to learn meaningful subject matter.
- A planned environment that included at least four learning centers in every classroom.
- Thematic unit planning that would provide the organizing framework for all subject matters.
- A heavy emphasis on cooperative learning to promote the critical social skills.
- A developmental discipline program that stressed children's reasoning and a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution.
- A schoolwide emphasis on music and the performing arts as a means of self-expression.

Obviously, to implement this program we made a strong investment in staff development, teacher support and coaching, and recognized that change occurs slowly over time.

The next major challenge was to document our effectiveness. We needed to develop a system of monitoring children's progress and also to report to parents and the public that the children were learning successfully. In short, we had to demonstrate accountability—but in a manner that was consistent with our beliefs and values.

Assessment Procedures

Once we identified the curriculum elements and developed an ongoing staff training/coaching mentoring system, we were able to focus on assessment. In our situation, this grew out of the need to be accountable for what was seen as a new "untried" program. Having eschewed the use of standardized testing procedures as inappropriate with young children, we had no acceptable replacement during the first year. We needed an assessment procedure that would reflect our beliefs, but also demonstrate that our students were making good progress. Additionally, the procedure would have to provide us with baseline data on which to do longitudinal studies.

We began with a dialogue on articulation among our K-2 teachers. What were the performance standards we could all accept as critical for students leaving our Primary Education Center for grade 2? This was not an easy process, and participants needed honesty, integrity, and the ability to compromise. The language arts area necessitated much more discussion and compromise than math, but in the end, we had developed our own school-site curriculum standards for K-2. Our curriculum standards reflected our beliefs about what was "essential knowledge" for these children and our belief in a collaborative process with all staff to ensure ownership of the results.

Our primary education staff then reflected on the current research in early childhood assessment and on the new directions in assessment from the state. We knew that we wanted an assessment model that was more observational in nature than testing of specific skills. We wanted one that was integrated with our curriculum standards rather than based on many different subject continuum, and a system that would use many methods for collecting data on children as they were engaged in the ongoing life of the classroom. We believe that good assessment is an integral part of curriculum and instruction rather than a separate, after-the-fact activity. The assessment needed therefore, especially in these early years, to be formative in nature, and to rely on teacher judgment and observation of what children can do, not just what they can't do. Finally, we wanted our assessment procedure to show progress over time not only to the teacher, but to the child and the parents as well. On a yearly basis as well as cumulatively after four years, we wanted to demonstrate growth in the areas of development we choose to emphasize.

We then worked at creating the three elements for our system—a portfolio, a method of observational recordkeeping, and a teacher support system.

Portfolios

Our portfolios included many items—we feel sure that there are too many. But since we are still refining the content, we wanted to give the receiving teachers the broadest range of information possible. We will meet later with receiving teachers for their evaluation of the most useful and least useful pieces and make revisions accordingly. We also believe parts of the previous year's portfolio can be useful as the child begins the next grade. He can "reconnect" with their earlier work—perhaps revising an earlier written piece will give a sense of growth to the child. We also believe that each year should see a "winnowing out" of some of the previous year's collection. The alternative would be a portfolio the size of a suitcase by the 7th grade.

Our portfolio system begins when a child enters our preschool, as early as three years old. For the first two years observational notes, work samples, and a developmental profile are included. As the child prepares to enter kindergarten, the teacher completes the math and language arts observational checklists. The math and language arts inventory are then completed twice a year by the kindergarten and 1st grade teachers. These documents, in checklist format, should not be completed by the teacher sitting with the child and "running through" the tasks on the list. More appropriately, the teacher uses anecdotal notes and makes judgments based on observations, with narrative comments whenever possible.

Our form entitled "Reading and Literature Study Inventory" is essential for our portfolios as we have moved our reading instruction to literature and away from basal readers. This is intended to give the receiving teacher a list of titles used for literature study (in kindergarten) and those used for reading instruction in grade 1.

In grade 1 portfolios, we also include a "Reading Profile Card." Divided into four quarters, it contains at least one title per quarter of a student-selected reading done individually with the teacher. The teacher also makes any notes about each reading assessment. When compiled for the year, this valuable process demonstrates the child's level of risk-taking with self-selected books—Does he always choose familiar print? Does he attend to the print of the text?

As the plan/do/review component of High Scope

is a priority in our program, we have included specific observational items that reflect the social interaction growth of the child. Based on observation during the planning, doing, and reviewing process, the teacher makes notes on this form for the portfolio. During kindergarten and 1st grade, a few samples of the child's plan/do/review sheets will be included as evidence in the growth and detail of the plan.

Each portfolio contains several writing samples. At kindergarten, an example of any journal writing students have done is included. For 1st grade we are also selecting some pattern writing, some journal entries, a "published story," a sample of writing done to a prompt, a book report, etc. We will be evaluating these during the coming year, with input from the receiving teacher as to which pieces provided them with the best information about the students. Then we plan to eliminate those pieces deemed less useful.

At 1st grade we are also attaching a few student-generated items in the math inventory: one "number sentence" written by the student and an example of work with place value. With these additions we hope to emphasize the importance we place on the student's ability to communicate *about* the math process as well as compute.

For 1st graders we have piloted audiotapes this year. At least twice a year students self-selected a book and read into the tape recorder. This had proven most useful at conferences—in sharing with parents both the amount of risk the student is taking with print, and the strategies he or she is developing.

Observation Issues

In developing this type of ongoing assessment, our teachers realized the need for better ways to gather observational data. It is impossible to trust dynamic interactions to memory, and general observations often lack the specificity of notes taken "on the spot."

We have worked with several models for notetaking. One was to create a large grid with student names and use gummed notes (different colors for each quarter of the year) for on-the-spot observations in each of the curricular domains. As the notes were posted on the grid, teachers had a visual reminder of the students who had not been observed. This could be kept on the inside of a closet door if student privacy were an issue. Periodically the grid was cleared and notes put into portfolios. Then at the four reporting periods of the year, teachers reviewed the specific notes while completing the inventories. One teacher set a schedule for herself to observe—math, language arts, socialization and so on. Another teacher took notes on mailing labels that went on a sheet in the child's portfolio.

We know that this intense observation is an activity in which teachers need support—perhaps an "extra pair of eyes" in the classroom occasionally, the freedom to try many varied methods, the time to talk together to discuss successes and problems. We believe this is essential because in the past, teachers were told that observational data aren't as reliable as test scores. To become confident with the validity of their observations and judgments, teachers need a little "friendly" support.

With this in mind, we began "assessment roundtables" — meetings for teachers to discuss not only the whys for portfolio assessment, but the hows. We used recent articles on assessment to reinforce our philosophical stance, and then we spent time discussing the "nitty-gritty" of our system. Time management is a critical issue, and we collaborated on success methods used in our own rooms.

An important point during our discussions was the quality of the observational notes we made. We are attempting as a staff to align our observational notes with specific behaviors or performances that we will be assessing on later checklists and narrative summaries. This process must continue if our teachers are to become proficient in observing, recording, and passing on important data about student growth. District resources must be committed to provide teachers with the time and support necessary to allow this type of assessment process to continue to evolve. Without this process, teachers will feel overwhelmed by these tasks and may return to other, less authentic forms of assessment.

Accountability

In addition to assessing our students' progress in a formative way, we also need to demonstrate the overall program effectiveness. To date, the only summative, standardized measure of our program has been the results of the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) administered at the end of 2nd grade. Although we feel this test overemphasizes isolated skills decontextualized from meaningful content and does not recognize important elements of our curriculum, we have been gratified to find our PEC students have done

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very well on this test. They have achieved as well or higher on every subtest as their peers in neighboring schools who received a more traditional primary program. In particular, their scores on the mathematical concepts and application subtests were significantly higher than their peers.

Currently, our district is developing more authentic standardized assessment procedures that are aligned with our curriculum standards,. These new assessment tasks will eventually replace the CTBS as a measure of our program effectiveness.

Sharing the Vision—Building Readiness for Change: The School District of Waukesha Waukesha, Wisconsin

Barbara Brzenk, Joanne Trebatoski

The School District of Waukesha joined the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium in an attempt to answer the needs for change in our K-3 program.

Demographics

Located in southeastern Wisconsin, Waukesha is the state's sixth largest district. It serves 12,700 students from seven municipalities. The majority of the students are from the city of Waukesha, one of the state's fastest growing communities. The ethnic makeup is predominantly white (91 percent) with Hispanics (6 percent), Asians (1.5 percent), Native Americans (1 percent), and blacks (0.6 percent).

The majority of people living in Waukesha are employed in manufacturing, professional services, and wholesale/retail trade. Although its proximity to Milwaukee allows some people to reside in Waukesha and work in Milwaukee, Waukesha is not a suburban community but rather a city with its own identity.

Waukesha prides itself on its fine public school system as well as its higher education institutions. Carroll College, the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha, and Waukesha County Technical College are part of the community. According to the 1980 census, 77 percent of the community have finished high school, and slightly over 20 percent have graduated from college.

The Program

This is an exciting and challenging time for educators, as school districts across the United States commit themselves to move toward excellence in programming for young children.

Initiatives for restructuring schools and moving toward more developmentally appropriate educational practices permeate professional literature as well as periodicals written for the general public. *Educational Leadership, The Reading Teacher, Phi Delta Kappan, The Young Child, The Arithmetic Teacher,* and *Newsweek* have devoted entire issues as well as individual articles to these initiatives.

How does a school district develop a shared vision of what *is* excellence in programming for young children? How do visionary leaders effectively develop a readiness for change within an entire school district? These are crucial questions in making changes that will improve education for young children. We would like to share with you some of the strategies that worked for us as we began to implement changes in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

In a recent survey by the Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce, residents said that the quality of public schools was one of the top three positive aspects of the Waukesha community.

Developing a Vision

Before our vision could be developed, we realized that a group of educators or perhaps an individual educator had to be committed to a strong belief in the effectiveness and importance of developmentally appropriate educational practices. Once well versed in the findings of recent research on this subject, they could lead others to share the same vision. Without strong district visionaries to spread the dream and inspire others, change would not have occurred.

Roland Barth (1990) suggests that before embarking on initiating changes in educational practices, one needs to ask the following questions:

- Do *I* really believe that schools need a complete overhaul or maybe just an oil change?
- Am *I* prepared to accept *my* contribution to schools and to restructure *my* own techniques and beliefs?
- Can we observe our own schools with detachment and insight? To envision the future, we have to see the present with new eyes.
- Can schools restructure themselves?
- What is it about our schools that needs to be restructured: Assess conditions to determine

what enriches and what subtracts. Adjust our attitudes to believe that all practice is tentative until more appropriate techniques are known. Then change the unacceptable.
- How much am I prepared to risk in the business of restructuring? Am I willing to risk what is safe and comfortable for me for what is better educationally for others?

To implement positive and effective change, we needed educational leaders at the district level who were willing to take risks and invest large amounts of professional time and physical and intellectual energy. Once these leaders committed themselves to developing and implementing shared vision for educational change; the next crucial issue became building a readiness for change.

Building Readiness for Change

First, we had to assess the district's readiness for change and then build a stronger readiness for change.

Readiness can be defined as the degree to which people affected by the change are predisposed to support, ignore, or resist it. To determine readiness, our leaders gathered information on the following factors:

- Level of dissatisfaction with the present situation;
- Number of teachers who thought change was attractive;
- Staff willingness to change behaviors;
- Degree of stability of the staff/rate or staff turnover;
- Degree of support from key decision makers/administrators;
- District resources available to support the change;
- Outside resources available to support the change; and
- Staff willingness to participate in training.

After assessing the level of readiness using observation techniques; telephone and written needs-assessment surveys of teachers, parents, and administrators; informal information gathering at small group meetings; climate surveys and other techniques, we needed to determine how to build a strong readiness for change.

Because the level of dissatisfaction with the present situation was low in our district, the visionaries needed to use awareness activities that would point out the flaws in our current system. To do this, we:

- Disseminated articles from various professional periodicals;
- Disseminated self-tests to staff, such as the "How Developmentally Appropriate Is Your Kindergarten Test?";
- Showed videos by recognized national experts speaking about excellence in educational programming at staff meetings followed by discussion of implications for our district;
- Sent teachers and administrators to visit classrooms with model programs and have them share their observations at staff meetings.

We also held release time staff development meetings in which staff members worked in small groups to brainstorm children's developmental levels at various ages. Each group brainstormed a developmentally-appropriate educational program for each age. Similarities would inevitably appear when they shared results with the whole group. This activity really gets the thought processes going. Be prepared to handle defensive arguments about why the present programs are not developmentally appropriate.

Please note: It is important to include teachers, administrators, and even school board members in these activities.

After creating questions about our current program, we found it helpful to bring in an outside consultant to speak on developmentally appropriate education. This "expert" added credibility to the message our district visionaries had begun to share.

The next step was to *assess who was willing to take a risk*—which teachers were willing to change behavior? Which key decision makers/ administrators supported the change? It is crucial that key decision makers support the change.

Now we could begin creating a shared vision while continuing to build readiness for change. We formed a committee of teachers, administrators, and parents willing to take a risk at change. People with a variety of talents are needed to successfully implement change. The committee needed to:

- Become district "experts" on developmentally appropriate education and the change implementation theory;
- Develop a draft of a philosophy, mission statement, and goals to guide the change process, using input from all staff members affected by these documents;

- Develop long range plans that include the resources needed to facilitate the plans;
- Network with districts that are initiating similar changes;

In addition, you need to *secure* long range budget allocations for the necessary classroom materials and staff development. In our district as we eliminated workbooks in kindergarten and 1st grade, we asked that the same amount of money previously spent on workbooks be allocated to each classroom for the purchase of math manipulative and Big Books, literature, writing materials, and other items.

Also, *plan and implement extensive staff development* activities that will spread the dream. In our district these included workshops on hands on/manipulative math, problem-solving alternatives to the use of workbooks to teach reading, whole language methods, emergent reading/writing processes, observation and other informal assessment techniques, portfolio assessment, child choice/decision making, and learning centers

Provide inservice to a cadre of administrators and teachers about change implementation theory and techniques including understanding the stages of change and different acceptance levels of change, for example, early adapters vs. late adapters. Understanding the change process was crucial as we developed a shared vision and began implementing change.

Once we successfully shared the vision and had built a readiness for change, the energy and momentum of the change process sometimes pushed the leaders to move faster than they had planned. It was indeed an exciting and challenging time for educators as we committed ourselves to move towards more developmentally appropriate educational practices and excellence in programming for young children.

Description of Programs

In Waukesha we offer these pre-1st-grade programs:

- The Kindergarten Readiness Program and Bilingual Preschool Program, serving 4-year-old "at risk" children in half-day programs. These children have been screened and show slight delays in language, fine or gross motor skills, cognitive-verbal or personal social skills.
- Half-day kindergarten programs for all children who are 5 by September 1.
- Chapter 1 support for eligible kindergarten children. This support is usually given through a team teaching approach.
- Early Childhood Exceptional Education Programs for children, ages 3 to 6, who are diagnosed as physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, learning disabled, or speech and language delayed. These are half-day programs until a child reaches the level where he is integrated into kindergarten. Then it becomes a full-day program with kindergarten in the morning and additional exceptional education support in the afternoon from the early childhood teachers.
- Before- and after-school programs, often referred to as "Latch Key Programs," provided in the Waukesha community by the Salvation Army and the YWCA. The school district cooperates to assist families with the need to receive these services. Other day care centers within the community also offer before- and after-school care for a wide age range of children. Transportation is provided by these agencies.

All of the pre-1st-grade programs in the district share a common philosophy and goals. While recognizing the individual uniqueness of each child, the staff believes that all pre-1st-grade children are more alike than they are different. They all need active learning experiences: opportunities for play, exploration, experimentation; and concrete experiences that involve sensory/motor learning. They need the chance to be a part of a language-rich environment filled with opportunities to think, speak, and listen; to be surrounded with and explore print; to listen to good literature and other forms of written language. They need to participate in emergent writing activities, to make choices, to solve problems, to be responsible, and to develop self-esteem. They need the opportunity to interact with peers and adults and to build social competencies that will allow them to lead satisfying, productive lives.

Therefore, all of our pre-1st-grade programs use a developmentally appropriate integrated curriculum, organized around thematic units; a whole language approach to emergent reading and writing; "a manipulative/hands-on approach to math and science"; and an emphasis on developing thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

Looking Ahead — Looking Back

When Waukesha joined the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium, our pre-1st-grade programs were highly structured and teacher directed with few child-choice activities except at playtime. We used workbooks in math and reading and a traditional basal reading program. The teachers were almost totally skill/product-oriented in their approach.

The twenty-six kindergarten classrooms did not consistently receive the basic equipment they needed to implement a developmentally appropriate program. Their environment was table/chair and paper/pencil-oriented and not print- or material-rich.

After three years our pre-1st-grade programs have child-choice activities as an integral part of their day. No workbooks and few worksheets are used. An emergent literacy/whole language approach is used in reading, with flexible grouping encouraged. Teachers are balanced in both process and skill orientation. All of the kindergartens are equipped with the basic developmentally appropriate equipment. Money formerly spent on workbooks is being spent on hands-on math/science materials and literature-based reading/writing materials. Our kindergarten environment is print and materials rich.

Also, developmentally appropriate educational practices are beginning to spread to 1st and 2nd grade. A committee of teachers, principal, and curriculum chairpersons was formed in September 1990 to study developmentally appropriate programs. It has written a district philosophy and goals and has started staff development meetings to develop a readiness for change. The committee is working on a three-year plan for implementation.

We in Waukesha have become active participants in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium plan for change. We urge others to study the differences as reported here and in other reports. We feel ours has been a constructive change—a change truly for the better.

Linking Assessment to Accountability/Linking Curriculum to Appropriate Assessment: South Brunswick School District South Brunswick, New Jersey

Cheryl Polakowski, Willa Spicer, Judy Zimmerman

South Brunswick began to develop an early childhood program in 1983 when the board of education asked the administration to report on the controversy over whether kindergarten should be more academic or social. What we discovered was that there was a good deal of new knowledge in this field and that we did not know much. So teachers and administrators alike began to study, forming committees on how children learn and, later, on program elements and organizational issues. After seven years of study, program revision and reflection, we believed that we had built an exemplary program. In addition to receiving national media recognition, we were selected for the ASCD consortium. Our mission statement clearly summarized our purposes:

> The South Brunswick early childhood program is a joint venture of staff and parents. Its aim is to ensure that children between the ages of 4 and 7 experience:
>
> **NO FAILING!**
>
> **NO BOREDOM!**
>
> **NO FEAR OF MISTAKES!**

Most parents supported our efforts. Teachers were being trained in an established laboratory school held each summer, and children clearly enjoyed being in early childhood classrooms.

What we did not understand was that change would be constant. As long as the program was grounded in a strong, theoretical framework, the need or desire to change would emerge. We had to remember the lessons we had learned about change: ensure a long time line, connect the change or changes to curriculum and staff development, and make sure the change is managed by those intimately involved in it.

Demographics

South Brunswick is a rapidly growing community of 42 square miles that span either side of the Route 1 corridor between Philadelphia and New York City. The community is diverse, consisting of farms, mobile homes, and new developments of $400,000 homes. The children who attend South Brunswick Schools come from families representing over forty-five native languages. They are the children of high level scientists, technicians, truck drivers, factory workers, and corporate executives. The minority makeup is 10 percent African American and 18 percent Asian American.

The 4,000 children attend one of seven elementary schools, all K-6, or the 7-8 middle school, or the 9-12 high school. The per pupil expenditure for the 1990-91 school year was $6,200.

Assessment: Portfolios The First Step

> *"I think this child should be seen by the Child Study Team," said the teacher for the third time during the meeting. "She's in 1st grade and she can't even retell a story she has just heard. She doesn't know her letters or sound."*
>
> *"But I thought we had a developmentally appropriate early childhood program: children are to have time to grow and learn." The school principal had been through this conversation often in the past. "Is the child making progress?" she asked.*
>
> *"I haven't seen any," replied the teacher, "and I have had the child for four months."*

This conversation, repeated in school after school, was the impetus for the first change in our program related to individual student assessment. It would have been easy to ignore the issue. Argument among teachers, administrators, and child study team members about what constitutes a problem and warrants elaborate testing had been going on for years. Now however, the early childhood people-teachers, administrators, and specialists—were ready to look at our

inability to describe our youngsters and ascertain their progress in a careful, thoughtful way.

First, we fleshed out the dimensions of the problem as we understood them at that time. We acknowledged that standardized tests used for five to eight year olds did not measure what we were teaching and did not give an accurate description of what our children could actually accomplish. It was apparent that the question of growth was not linear and undimensional and that growth for a young child did not correspond with scores on a standardized acheivement test. For years we had tried to deal with standardized tests by searching for those that were appropriate; now, we finally acknowledged that none were appropriate.

We reaffirmed our goals, reminding ourselves that each child enters our schools with unique characteristics and proceeds through the stages of development at an individual rate. We reaffirmed our direction, reminding ourselves that we wanted a program in which children could grow differentially and find success.

Second, we set forth a plan that included the elements required for change. We set aside time for teachers and administrators, especially those on the early childhood committee, to read about assessment and examine the issues related to collecting children's work and recording information. We invited a researcher from Educational Testing Service (ETS) to join our study group on assessment, and we encouraged people on staff to attend workshops and seminars on this topic. We built in time for field tests, for reflection sessions, for school level conversations, and for training.

While we researched and studied appropriate ways to assess young children, we were careful to communicate with the staff that their experience would be the bedrock of any assessment methods we eventually used. With this agreement, teachers in all kindergartens agreed to try out the first portfolio—a red, accordion-pleated, open envelope containing a file folder for each early childhood grade.

The teachers received a variety of observation checklists—oral language, reading, writing, and problem solving—to put into each child's portfolio. They also received directions on taking a reading sample and for collecting writing samples. The portfolio contained the first draft of a word construction test.

However, the portfolio's most important feature was that it provided an organization scheme that allowed a teacher to create a record that could follow a child for the three years he would spend in our early childhood program. Actually, that was the only feature of the first portfolio that remained intact from the first year.

The Second Step

"This is just too much work," a teacher reported to the portfolio review committee gathered around the meeting table. "The only part of the portfolio I like is the Word test."

"Me too," interrupted another teacher. She turned to the first teacher who had not been on the committee the past year. "You know we called that word construction test WAWA so nobody would refer to it as a spelling test. I think it worked."

"Yeah," added another participant, "but it doesn't make up for filling out all those check lists for kids who are growing just fine. I don't need all this junk. Except for the WAWA and the Concepts About Print test, I haven't looked at most of the portfolios all year long." With that she reached into a bright red portfolio and pulled out a pile of papers. "This kid isn't having any problems, so what do I need all this paper for?"

To review the use of the portfolios in kindergarten and revise them for the following year, we reflected on the problems of the first year. It took the teachers some time to understand their own experiences and to agree on the overlapping elements in that experience. Finally, it became clear that the teachers valued some of the data they had collected but believed that they were collecting a good deal of unnecessary information.

Again, we went back into our theory for direction, reminding ourselves of the great variability in the functioning of kindergarten children. We retold our own story, pointing out that the original problem had to do with differentiation among children. Teachers pointed out that the portfolio, while it helped us describe the functioning of the children, was not differentiated at all and merely reinforced the concept that we treated all children at one grade level in the same way.

When we looked to other assessment efforts for help, we noticed the learning records from Great Britain. We learned that teachers in Great Britain collected basic data on all children but were encour-

aged to make decisions about how much information was needed for any one child. Their assessment records contained optional forms that teachers could add to the record when they felt more information might be needed.

That concept broke through the problem of too much effort for too little return. We realized two important things: (1) that we need not collect the same information on every child and (2) that teachers carried a vast amount of information about children in their heads and should be trusted to consider what information might be needed.

We decided that some things should be constant: an interview of the child and the parent every year, and a fall and spring self portrait. The reading and writing samples remained and the infamous WAWA (word construction test) was revised and retained. All the checklists became optional. They were to be used only if the teacher saw from the other assessment instruments that a child was having difficulty.

But how could we prevent a well-meaning teacher from overlooking a child and failing to collect information that might be needed in future years? In anticipation of that possibility, the assessment committee decided that teachers would review their knowledge of every child at least twice a year and record the conclusions on the class record sheet. The teachers asked themselves five questions about each child's behavior. Did the child choose to read? Write willingly? Retell a story? Listen attentively and speak up in both large and small groups? If so, no further information was needed. If however, the child did not regularly display these critical behaviors or the teacher could not remember seeing them, then checklists must be placed in the portfolio to help explain the lack of desired behavior.

A new table of contents and new directions for the redesigned portfolio was distributed to all 1st grade teachers who replaced the kindergarten table of contents with the new one. Portfolios were opened for the entering kindergartners, and all the forms (both required and optional) were filed in a special teachers' "Assessment Kit," solving an organization problem that had also come from the summer review.

The contents of the second portfolio survived the year's experience with both kindergarten and 1st grade teachers, although items were added during the following summer. Before the year was over, problems arose from other sources that led to further changes in the assessment process.

The Third Step

"That's interesting," said the president of the board of education following a presentation of changes in the early childhood program, "but how do you know if all this work makes any difference?"

"Do our children perform any differently on standardized tests?" asked another board member.

"We don't think the standardized tests properly measure our program" answered the director of instruction.

"You are going to leave the question of whether a child is learning properly solely to teacher opinion?" The board member was visibly upset. "Surely one teacher will judge differently from the next. What can parents count on? As a matter of fact, how do we know if the children are learning or you folks are just fooling yourselves?"

We had come full circle. The teachers were satisfied that they were collecting important information in the portfolios and they were sharing with parents, with child study teams, with each other, and with administrators. Everyone agreed that the portfolio contents helped interested parties describe the child and build an understanding of his or her behaviors. What we could not do was assure ourselves or other decision makers that our data had any validity or reliability outside a given teacher's classroom. In addition, we could not use the volumes we had on every child to help us assess the program itself because we could not aggregate the data in any meaningful way.

We talked of the portfolios as theory-referenced data. Just as norm-referenced tests yielded information about the norm group and criterion-referenced tests yielded information about criteria used to build the specifications, the portfolios yielded information about the child in relation to our operating theories of early childhood education. The portfolios were developed to monitor a child, and they were used to do just that, allowing the teacher to illustrate progress using real samples of the child's work, tests, and retests on measures of literacy and observation forms if needed.

We had offset the limitations of standardized tests—the portfolio was absolutely correlated to what was going on in South Brunswick's early childhood classrooms. At the time, however, we had lost the

values of the commercial tests: (1) the confidence that comes from knowing that the tests are beyond the teacher's or the district's biases and (2) the ease of using numbers that can be easily aggregated to describe groups and subgroups.

This new problem gradually gained conscious expression during the fall of the portfolio's second year. By then we had gained some sophistication in assessment, so that when we approached the problem with the Educational Testing Service (ETS), we felt confident that we could find a solution. We soon found an approach that interested both teachers and researchers. Why not create a numerical scale that reflects the portfolio and the theory that is embodied in it? If we could do that, we might be able to increase the standardization of the data and improve our ability to describe groups and subgroups within the student population.

Thus, a group of teachers and researchers examined the portfolios of six 1st grade youngsters. Using a holistic scoring process that allowed comparisons of the portfolios, we began to identify the elements that characterized the work of children at several levels of literacy.

Gradually, comparing our findings with scales found in the literature, we drafted a six-point scale based on the data before us. Despite the fact that the portfolio had data about attitudes, behavior, and reading comprehension, we limited our scale to the ability of children to make sense from print. We worried over every word, going through three drafts, before taking it out of committee. Finally we were ready to see if the scale could help us standardize our responses.

The method of standardization included three steps. First, teachers from two schools were brought together and trained to use the scales by scoring four or five sample portfolios from 1st graders. Disagreements were discussed. Teachers were taught to concentrate on the data from the portfolio and to avoid reading into the data. Second, teachers were asked to place three or four of their own students on the scale, using the portfolios they had brought to the meeting. Third, the portfolios from teachers at one school were exchanged with the portfolios from teachers at another school. The teachers were asked to place children they did not know on the scale, using just the information available from the portfolios.

The scores were compared, and to our great surprise and joy we discovered that if everything was included in the portfolio, there was agreement between the child's own teacher and the teacher from another building on every child. Our confidence in the portfolios as a measure of assessing student progress increased.

Also, the scales permitted us to talk about the progress of groups and to show where our children started each year and where they ended. At the end of the 1991 school year, every kindergarten and 1st grade child was placed on the scale. At the end of next year, we will be able to talk about their progress as a group and a series of subgroups.

The Fourth Step

"How can you use a single number to describe a whole child," asked the teacher. "These scales don't say enough about the kids."

"Right! This is just going back to the numbers."

"Wait a minute," said the administrator," you can't have it both ways. You can't rant against standardization and evidence without losing the trust of the public. Try to tell people there is no way to talk about groups of kids."

"Well," was the reply, "at least let us upgrade the portfolio so that it reflects real literacy. We haven't done nearly enough with comprehension. There's more to this reading and writing stuff than making words from print."

To this day, we have searched for solutions to the paradox. The child is whole. When we describe her, when we talk about her needs, when we discuss our classrooms and our schools, we are forced to use at least some analytic procedures. We are forever breaking behaviors, understandings, attitudes, dispositions, and even learning into smaller parts.

Despite the fact that we no longer depend on long checklists, skill arrays, or even standardized tests, we will build whole/part relationships. Even though our objectives are no longer trivial, they are not whole either. We will forever be criticized by those who believe we do not gather the type data about children that permits good judgments about them or the program and by those who believe that collection of any numerical data is a disservice to the nature of children and their uniqueness.

Faced with the paradox, South Brunswick teachers decided that the solution rested with collecting more data rather than eliminating what already existed. Most of the teachers were committed by now to data. Few

argued that the portfolios were too much work, or that they were useless. Now the argument was that they were incomplete and inadequate to the task of describing the complexity of the children.

The solution, reasoned the committee that reviewed the second portfolio, was to add an extensive piece on story retelling. That would ensure a description of comprehension and augment the information so stubbornly stated as a single scale score.

Decision making was much easier at this reflective session. Teachers suggested how to collect data about stories read to the child and stories the child read himself or herself. Issues of oral and written retelling were quickly resolved, and at the end of two mornings of discussion, only the problem of responses to nonfiction books remained.

In record time, teachers reviewed the forms for interview of the child and the parent, decided that neither achieved its purpose, and revised the forms. The teachers confidence was amazing. Not one person asked the director of curriculum what she wanted. It is what "We" want or at least what "you" collectively want that was of significance in this discussion.

The South Brunswick early child teachers were assessors. The data belonged to them and they knew they felt in control.

The Effect of the Portfolio

"I don't understand this program," said one parent to the principal as she shook her head, bewildered. "All the children seem to do is play. This looks nothing like when I went to school. Why don't the children bring home work sheets so I know what they have done during the day?"

This was not an unusual comment, but one that was heard every year as our early childhood program developed. Parents seemed to want to understand the program by having some concrete evidence of what was happening and how their child was doing. As much as we invited them in to volunteer or to observe, and as many workshops that we offered them, they still felt a need to understand better what their child was doing.

The portfolios helped us with this. On the school level the portfolios helped us to describe a child's progress over time in specific terms and gave us concrete examples from a child's work. The effect was that the school dialog changed. For example, we were now able to analyze a young child's spelling by talking about the specific developmental level, assigning a label to it and describing the characteristics of each of the levels. We could say, "Henry is a transitional speller. He is thinking about how the words appear visually. He is approaching the standard conventions of spelling, because he remembers to put vowels in each syllable and even uses consonant sounds frequently."

Not only were we better at talking to parents about specific behaviors, but we were better at talking with each other. Conversations in the teachers' room and at School Assistance Team meetings became were more descriptive and more objective. We had a better fix on what a child was able to do and could more easily focus on additional strategies or materials and really begin to vary the instruction and build from strengths. As a result, we have fewer children being referred to special services. We are picking up and focusing on specific needs much earlier, due to a more careful individualized assessment. Compared to four years ago, we are less likely to retain a child, more likely to try special strategies and different resources and more likely to understand one another in the process.

This September we will give the board of education the first description of the kindergarten and 1st grader in terms that teachers understand and approve. We will then end standardized testing at these grade levels, confident that we can show and measure progress using instruments that are resistant to teacher bias and subjectivity.

Contents of K-2 Portfolios

- Self-portraits that are drawn by the children at both the beginning and end of the school year.
- An interview, conducted in September, that asks each child about his favorite pastimes and reading activities at home.
- A questionnaire sent home to the parents at the beginning of the school year that solicits their input and helps build a working relationship between parent and teacher.
- A test of the child's understanding of the conventions of books and print, that is administered at both the beginning and end of kindergarten.
- The word awareness writing activity, administered at the end of kindergarten and at the beginning and end of 1st grade.
- Unedited samples of the child's free writing, that may include translations by the teacher if in-

vented spelling or sketchy syntax make them difficult to read.

- A remodeling sample, collected three times a year, that allows teachers to estimate the strategies each individual child is using to deal with print. Two techniques are used: a running record for emergent readers and a miscue analysis for independent readers.
- A record of the child's ability to retell a story, recorded three times over the course of their school year.
- A class record that profiles the accumulated knowledge about the class on a one-page matrix.

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

In looking back we have learned a great deal and are proud of our accomplishments. The changes we have made are positive ones. We developed a way of assessing children, which eliminated the use of standardized tests in early childhood. We also formed group of knowledgeable educators, well versed in the assessment theory and terminology, who truly understand what it means to assess a child's progress and can put it into operation. Throughout the process of developing our new assessment, we reaffirmed our program goals and our understanding of the developmental stages of 5 to 8 year olds.

Our teachers became researchers themselves and moved away from the "how it affects me and my classroom" view to the larger issue of what is best for the district and the program. We learned that as teachers become researchers and developers, they learn the theory and can articulate it better than if they read it or are told about it.

Perhaps what is most significant about what we learned was the fact that whereas we did not have to collect exactly the same information on every child, we did have to standardize that which was the same. Although the portfolio data enabled us to accurately describe individuals well, we learned that there were ways that we could accurately describe groups and that we could eliminate individual bias or subjectivity. Our numerical scales allowed us to talk about the progress of groups and to share the information with decision makers and parents. We were able to talk about progress as a group and as a sub group.

We learned how critical yearly training is to continue the accurate use of portfolios. We can never assume that portfolio use and understanding will continue on without such training. The training each year is important for senior staff as well as new teachers. Reminders about the theory and practical applications of the portfolios, how to use them and their value, and specific ways to administer different aspects of the portfolio tools are part of the training. However, of greatest significance, is the yearly training for standardization. We now train for standardization each January and bring all early childhood teachers and their administrators together to complete this task. Since we hire substitutes for this period, as budget constraints for substitute money become greater, we will begin to do more training and hope this model will be just as effective.

Now because of the portfolios, we are less likely to retain a children or to refer them to special services. Those cases that are now referred to special services are done so after much work with the child and parents and much data collection. The children who are referred are most likely to be clinically reading disabled rather than those having simple learning difficulties. We can be more selective and careful before we refer a child for a possible evaluation.

We have once again learned that change in South Brunswick is an interesting phenomenon. It has always been grounded in a strong, theoretical framework that says that change comes out of a common realization that there is a need or desire to change and that change only works when those who will be affected are intimately and deeply involved in it over time. We have once again acknowledged that time indeed is a critical variable in the change process.

We know that change takes time and consequently, we have always chosen long timelines for implementing change. As we moved forward in this change process, we continued to acknowledge the need to connect the change or changes to curriculum and staff development. In looking back, we realized once again that communication is the key, and that keeping all informed along the way as to the progress of the assessment work enabled us to progress so well. We used long timelines with teacher play and revision a critical strategy within that time period.

Calling on available experts in our immediate area gave us the incentive and credibility as well as the knowledge to progress forward, even when we might have faced difficulty coming up with a solution to a problem is we were left on our own. With the support of the building administrators, we were able to play and experiment. Several administrators were involved

in the study group over the years; yet all were informed, given the knowledge, and were trained.

Because of our experience with developing an assessment portfolio in reading, we are now ready to begin to develop math portfolios using the same approach. We chose to wait to develop our math portfolios because our math curriculum has just been evaluated and revised to conform to National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards and is midway through its first year of implementation. This summer we plan to begin the math portfolio development; the staff will have been through the first year of the new program.

When we began working on portfolio assessment in 1989, we never realized how powerful that work would be in raising expectations, increasing differentiation of instruction, increasing understanding of the developmental stages of the young child, and in enhancing the abilities of the teacher. Certainly, we have learned that assessment can be a powerful tool for change at all levels of instruction. It forces the educational institution to question all that it once valued and to articulate those values very clearly.

Our experience in adapting the ASCD consortium plan as adapted to the South Brunswick system has been extremely positive. We have gained renewed and enhanced confidence in our teaching and in ourselves.

Strategies to Promote Change in Early Childhood Education: Washington Elementary School District Phoenix, Arizona

Nedda Shafir

In the fall of 1988, the Washington Elementary School District recognized a need to examine its educational program (K-3) and to adapt the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium philosophy to meet the particular needs of our school setting.

Demographics

Washington Elementary School District, a large urban school district serving a community of more than 200,000, is the largest elementary school district in Arizona. Twenty-seven elementary schools and five junior high schools provide services for 22,900 students. The diversity of the needs of the students is reflected in the socioeconomic conditions as well as in the ethnic composition of the student enrollment. The students range from backgrounds of low socioeconomic status to upper middle class status. Although 80 percent of the student population has been identified as white, there are increasing numbers of black, Hispanic, and Asian students who represent a variety of language-minority groups.

The Program

The early childhood education program in the Washington Elementary School District focused on four components: Assessment, parent involvement, staff development, and school based intervention.

The foundation of our district's early childhood program is a diverse menu designed to provide services to meet the spectrum of needs presented by the young children to whom this large, urban district is committed. In philosophy and practice, the Washington Elementary School District supports the developmental notion that each child is unique and possesses an individual growth timetable. The curriculum is designed to provide meaningful opportunities for emotional, social, and physical cognitive growth supported by current research findings (See Figure 2). The developmentally appropriate content of the curriculum focuses on the strategies as well as the skills that create the learning environment necessary to contribute to whom and what each child will become (See Figure 3).

To ensure a successful early childhood experience for preschool through grade 3 students, we provide them with opportunities to grow, learn, and develop. Teachers acquire the necessary skills and strategies through a staff development program based on discovery, experience, and manipulation of materials. (See Figure 3).

Since the K-3 program was originally conceived as a districtwide program, the move to decentralize was more difficult due to our size and the diversity of cultures. Opportunities for growth and development for staff are vitally important to the change process. We express these opportunities for change as the five Cs: Change, Catalyst, Cadre, Commitment, and Community.

Change

The need to shift paradigms, from a remedial-based approach in early childhood services to a forward-thinking prevention and intervention-based design became the focus for change. Historical precedence could no longer be relied on; rather, teachers needed effective methods to deal with problems of changing demographics and declining performance levels of incoming students. This provided the incentive to change.

Catalyst

Defined as "something that speeds up reactions," the catalyst helped delineate the role of the administrator for early childhood education. Promoting change through collaborating with committees, assisting in creating a shared vision, and identifying change agents clarified the task at hand. The design for change included studying research, debating issues, revising curriculum, meeting in interest groups, and working

FIGURE 2

Accountability: For the entire well being of the child

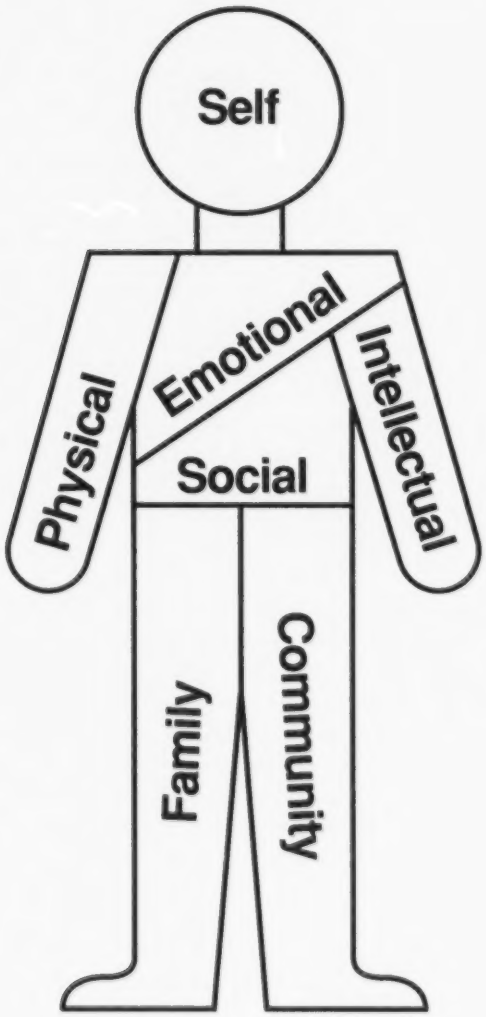

FIGURE 3

WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Academic Services

INDICATORS FOR EFFECTIVE K–3 PROGRAMS

Teacher Behaviors

- Uses appropriate curriculum and instruction to provide for the child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.
- Utilizes an integrated approach whenever possible.
- Provides goal and plans based on regular assessment of individual needs, strengths and interests.
- Emphasizes learning as a process, with interaction of people and materials.
- Increases difficulty, complexity and challenge of activities as students are involved and master understanding and skills.
- Develops self esteem by expressing respect, acceptance, and encouragement for students.
- Applies motor skills to develop gross and fine motor coordination, spacial awareness, and left to right directionality.
- Provides opportunities for communication skills to be fostered through hearing and using language.
- Plans for language development usage through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- Facilitates positive attitudes and self-control in students by setting clear limits and realistic expectations.
- Encourages parents to attend workshops and become involved in their child's education.

Student Behaviors

- Relates own experiences to curriculum to provide a meaningful context.
- Follows individual plans set up by teacher.
- Meets grade level expectations in subject areas.
- attends K–3 (SAFE) Summer School to provide further reinforcement and remediation of skills.
- Interacts with students and teachers in positive ways.

Classroom Organization/Environment

- Instructional skill groupings are provided when necessary so teachers can focus on appropriate critical skills.
- Strategies such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, buddy reading, and cross-age interaction are to reinforce instruction and allow students to feel successful.
- Environment is prepared to allow children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.
- Learning activities and materials should be concrete, real, and relevant.

with pilot programs—all with the goal of promoting developmentally appropriate practice in preschool through grade 3. Schools needed to be ready for children, not children ready for the schools. Attitudes needed to adjust to produce differing teaching and learning styles with curriculums and activities interrelated and based on needs and interest of the children.

It became the responsibility of many individuals to develop the solid foundation for the changes. As with any change, some individuals were progress oriented and anxiously joined study sessions, curriculum committees, and pilot programs. It was the naysayers who made change a laborious process because of their resistance to new ways. Eventually, through intensive staff development and a peer-coaching process, a district change toward a more appropriate curriculum took shape.

To support the change process, new opportunities for teacher growth and development needed to be provided. The heavy emphasis on a worksheet, test-driven curriculum needed to be infused with updated, appropriate early childhood instructional methods. Staff development became one of the strongest links to success in facilitating grass roots changes. Teachers could not be expected to give up traditional ways unless alternative techniques with strong rationale behind them were available to provide a stimulating and challenging environment.

Part of the change was assisted by additional funds from the state legislature, beginning in 1985. These formula funds became a shot in the arm to every district in Arizona in the form of $100 for each K-3 student. The money was to provide special academic assistance to potentially at-risk students. Program format, implementation, and assessment were designed by the districts who report annually to the State Board of Education. This was the perfect opportunity for the Washington School District to assist teachers and classroom assistants to begin making the change to materials and ideas that addressed and supported diversity in young children.

Special Academic Foundation Education (SAFE) inservices, provided 64 teachers from 27 schools the opportunity to participate in 34 hours of daytime workshops each year. These workshops were designed for hands-on experience in working with K-3 students. Sessions were scheduled during release time and after school with current materials provided. Big books, math materials, learning games, computer software, literature, and research materials were tools provided to enhance classroom instruction. Session topics included:

- Overview of current trends and issues in early childhood education
- Strategies for K-3 success
- Peer coaching
- Literacy and language development
  —reading as a process
  —writing as a process
- Developmentally appropriate practice
- Cooperative learning
- Appropriate computer usage
- Thinking skills
- Integrated curriculum
- Theories of how children learn
- Math as a hands-on approach
- Parent involvement

Each workshop stressed theory into practice, with a prevention and intervention focus rather than remedial focus. A program philosophy of teaching strategies, not skills, was stressed, with teachers receiving onsite visits from the program coordinator, and follow up through reflection logs and peer coaching planners. In addition to presentations and follow up, teachers were able to observe these new strategies in other schools and talk with teachers as to their implementation plans and effectiveness.

For instructional changes to take place, the atmosphere must promote risk taking, and creativity needs to be present and valued. The effectiveness of the program was evident in a variety of ways, not only with increased achievement, but also positive teacher and student attitudes towards learning. Teachers felt that they were equipped with an expanded repertoire of classroom instructional techniques to assist students.

School-based interventions showed the principals and staff planning programs that reflected the communities they represented. School improvement teams helped to plan and assess the effectiveness of school-based programs and identify areas of strength and future needs.

Cadre

We believe that the systemic changes were due to the cadre of individuals who were willing to develop a framework for new ideas and constantly refine and redirect the task. This cadre represented individuals from social education, community education, pre-

schools, primary grades, parenting programs, and Chapter 1 personnel. Staff consisted of teachers, principals, parents, and community members who worked with a unity of purpose. An ongoing dialog existed as funding sources and programs were integrated. This helped to reduce fragmentation of the child and ensured coordination of the delivery system.

Commitment

With the plethora of research in early childhood, it was incumbent to determine and embrace a philosophy that stressed high academic achievement for all students and that provided strategies for teachers to work with children of diverse backgrounds. About the time this search was underway, we had the opportunity to become a member of the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium. This three-year commitment afforded the team of a principal, central office administrator, parent and kindergarten teacher, the current research and knowledge base necessary to assist in making farreaching decisions. It also gave them a base of support from districts experiencing similar restructuring.

This commitment made a difference not only for the four individuals who participated in the consortium, but also for the other beneficiaries of the information emanating from the consortium. Thanks to this commitment, the early childhood personnel had the courage to speak up for what they believed to be appropriate practice for young children in the district and to take the steps necessary to make things happen.

Community

With the onset of a site-based management approach, each of the twenty-seven elementary buildings will emerge as an early childhood center. The vision for early childhood education will take shape as each school reflects and responds to its unique community situation, while retaining district support and focus. Using the guiding principles of developmentally appropriate practices, schools will provide a basic core of experiences and at the same time, meet specific community needs.

Conclusion

Looking back over the past three years of involvement in the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium, it is apparent that change could not have been mandated. It must be planted and nurtured with individuals realizing the value of doing things in a more effective and efficient manner. Due to changing demographics, students are coming into the schools with greater needs, many feeling behind before they start. Teacher and administrator roles have shifted. The children of the 1950s are gone forever, and it is critical that schools be proactive not reactive in working with our current populations. We must look outside our "education boxes" and not just rubber stamp programs that have been used merely on the basis of historical precedence, and we must analyze research on the effectiveness of what is currently taught and how. We cannot expect what worked for twenty years, during different social and economic times, to be the panacea for today. As educators, we must form alliances with families, business, and the community, to gather support for our worthy cause, the students. Teachers must take on roles that empower them as active decision makers. Staff must be knowledgeable about children, individual learning styles, and instructional methods that meet their needs.

ASCD's guiding philosophy has helped us develop strategies to promote appropriate practice and effectiveness in Washington Elementary School District's early childhood programs. It is the belief of the district that this paradigm shift into developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood will enable all students to be successful as they move forward. Looking ahead, the early childhood professionals must take a proactive stance as advocates for young children. Voices need to unite to focus on the process of learning while retaining the accountability that our profession expects and deserves.

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ASCD Early Childhood Education Resources

Videotapes

- **Early Childhood Education**

This video presents an introduction to an early childhood program model for classroom management and curriculum organization that incorporates current research on how young children learn. The videotape focuses on a K-1 class that is team-taught by two teachers, assisted by aides.

- **ASCD Cooperative Learning Series**

This video program introduces your school to the benefits of cooperative learning. With this new five-tape series and the accompanying training materials you can:

- Communicate to staff, school board members, and concerned parents how cooperative learning boosts student achievement and fosters the development of essential social skills.
- Learn a step-by-step way to turn existing lessons into cooperative learning lessons.
- Demonstrate how students learn the social skills necessary for working in groups.
- Discover three highly successful strategies developed at Johns Hopkins University to structure lessons using cooperative learning.
- Show teachers an example of a complete lesson that uses cooperative learning.

Audiotapes

- **Early Childhood Education in Public Schools**

Five audiotape—over eight hours of listening—bring you up-to-date on important trends and issues:

- Commitments in new staff and tax money.
- The "direct instruction vs. developmental" debate.
- Alarming demographic and sociological trends.

- **Early Childhood Education: The Whys and the Wherefores**

Presenter: David Elkind

Discover why early childhood programs unknowingly rely on misconceptions about how children learn. 1988.

- **An Academically Oriented Preschool for Five-Year-Olds: Direct Instruction Kindergarten**

Presenter: Doug Carnine

Hear the research that indicates why at-risk children should experience a direct instruction component in kindergarten. 1988.

- **What's Happening in Early Childhood Education Programs**

Presenter: Barbara Day

Become more aware of staggering demographic trends affecting early childhood programs. 1988.

- **Key Elements in Quality Early Childhood Education Programs**

Presenter: David Weikart

Know the seven key elements that every early childhood program—whatever its philosophical basis—needs to follow. Learn from the successes of the High/Scope foundation programs. 1988.

- **Engaging the Minds of Young Children**

Presenter: Lilian Katz

Understand developmental early childhood education and learn about effective curriculum and instruction in preschools. 1988.

- **New Trends in Kindergarten Programming**

A four-tape set brings you up-to-date on dramatic changes in this important field. Free binder included when you order all four tapes.

- **Why Should We Teach Kindergarten Children?**

Presenter: Bernard Spodek

Hear why theories of child development can help educators know what children are capable of learning, but should not be the only influence on what educators teach. 1988.

- **Quality Supervision of Early Childhood Programs**

Presenter: Barbara Day

Learn the four key leadership strategies that can make your kindergarten program a success. Plus, seven fundamental themes that every early childhood program should adhere to. 1988.

- **Technology in Early Childhood Education**

Presenter: Barbara Bowman

Are our students' problems with math and science caused by our kindergarten curriculum? Hear why schools need to offer children access to powerful technological tools. 1988.

- **Extending the Boundaries of Public Schools to Serve Young Children and Families**

Presenter: Michele Seligson

Many districts are extending the traditional role of schools to incorporate care of non-school-age children. Hear why schools can find allies and resources for child care and family-centered programs. 1988.

APPENDIX 1

ASCD
APPLICATION FORM
EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSORTIUM

I. Name of School District _____

Address _____

_____

_____

_____

City State Zip

Telephone _____

Name (and phone # if different) of contact person: _____

II. Proposed Network Representatives:

Name

1. _____ Central Office
2. _____ Principal
3. _____ Teacher
4. _____ Board member/parent

III. Enrollment

by age

_____ 4-year-olds

_____ 5-year-olds

_____ 6-year-olds

Total

Approximate ethnic composition of student body _____

Total number of students in district _____

Annual per pupil expenditure _____

Check which best represents your district:

Urban _____

Suburban _____

Rural _____

IV. 1. Check all of the following which are found in your district for children aged 4–6:

_____ Chapter I Program
_____ Follow Through Program
_____ Before School Program
_____ After School Program
_____ Full-day Kindergarten
_____ Half-day Kindergarten
_____ Full-day program for 4-year-olds
_____ Half-day program for 4-year-olds

2. For those items not checked above, briefly describe any plans you have for offering them by 1989. Also, indicate which ones your district would definitely *not* consider providing by 1989. (Use additional pages as needed.)

V. Please respond to the following questions in narrative form on separate pages (1–5 pages will be sufficient).

1. Describe your district's early childhood program as it currently exists (e.g. philosophy, curriculum, instructional approaches, teacher qualification, evaluation, etc).
2. Insofar as instructional leadership is concerned, who has major responsibility for early childhood programs (e.g. role of central office personnel, principals or assistants, department chair, etc)?
3. From your perspective, what are the most significant weaknesses in your school's present early childhood program?
4. Briefly describe why you feel participation in ASCD's Early Childhood Consortium would be of value to your district.
5. Please attach any materials such as handbooks or program information you think would help the selection committee to understand your school better.

VI. Signature of Superintendent

_____ _____

Name Phone

Return Form To:

Michelle Terry
Director of Professional Development
ASCD
1250 North Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 549-9110

APPENDIX 2

District Agreement

District Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Names of Team Members:

_____

_____

_____

_____

I have read the letter describing the ASCD Early Childhood Consortium and grant approval for the above named team over a 3-year period to:

a.) attend the 2 annual consortium meetings at district expense

b.) be involved in planning an exemplary early childhood program for the district

c.) work with ASCD on evaluating the consortium outcomes.

The Consortium outcomes have the support of the district.

_____	_____	_____
Signature	Print name	Date

APPENDIX 3
Early Childhood Consortium

Aspen School District RE #1
P.O. Box 300
Aspen, CO 81612
303-925-8057

Central Office: Tom Farrell
Principal: Barbara Tarbet
Teacher: Susan Hill
Board Member/Parent: Chuck Brandt

Elmira School District
Administration Building
951 Hoffman Street
Elmira, NY 14905
607-737-7400

Central Office: Harriet Sweet
Principal: Donald Keddell
Teacher: Larry Hall
Board Member/Parent: Lauren Schweizer

High Point Public Schools
P.O. Box 789
900 English Road
High Point, NC 27216

Central Office: Betty Royal
Principal: John M. Schroeder
Teacher: Susan Howard
Board Member/Parent: Collen Hartsoe

Jackson Public Schools District
662 South President
Jackson, MS 39201-5695
601-960-8872

Central Office: Clara Moulds
Principal: Elton Greer
Teacher: Susanne Hull
Board Member/Parent: Ollye Shirley

Lincolnwood School District #74
6950East Prairie Road
Lincolnwood, IL 60645
708-675-8234

Central Office: Mark Friedman
Principal: Jacqueline Feare
Teacher: Lynn Michelotti
Board Member/Parent: Debbie Silver

Muscatine Community School District
1403 Park Avenue
Muscatine, IA 52761
319-263-7223

Central Office: Janyce Myers
Principal: Polly Levine
Teacher: Lou Jasper
Board Member/Parent: Nancy Panther

Portland Public Schools
Multnomah County District No. 1
501 North Dixon
Portland, OR 97212
503-249-2000

Central Office: Rebecca Severeide
Principal: Betty Campbell
Teacher: Carlus Coakley
Board Member/Parent: Joe Voboril

Redwood City School District
815 Allerton
Redwood City, CA 94063
415-366-6819

Central Office: Ron Crates
Director, Primary Education: Linda Espinosa
Teacher: Betty Casey
Board Member/Parent: Terri Bailard

School District of Waukesha
Lindholm Building
222 Maple Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53186
414-521-8864

Central Office: JoAnne Trebatoski
Principal: Barbara Brzenk
Teacher: Barbara Daily
Board Member/Parent: Susan Newburg

South Brunswick School District
4 Executive Drive
Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852
908-297-7800

Central Office: Willa Spicer
Principal: Judith Zimmerman
Teacher: Cheryl Polakowski
Board Member/Parent: John Wolfe

Washington Elementary School District
8610 North 19th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85021
602-864-2831

Central Office: Nedda Shafir
Principal: Peggy George
Teacher: Pat Kelly
Board Member/Parent: Marylou Moseke